

EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

Thesis/Project

PASTORAL CARE IN COMMUNITY:
CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER IN ANXIOUS TIMES

BY

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Abstract

This thesis responds to the observation that we all carry a burden of anxiety and distress that can be directly attributed to our awareness of many pervasive and significant issues. These range from climate change to economic instability to fear of terrorism. The nature of these problems is such that they rarely provoke the types of personal crises to which our traditional means of one-on-one pastoral care are designed to respond. Yet, the cumulative impact of these multiple concerns is debilitating, often affecting our overall spiritual health and our ability to respond hopefully to these important challenges.

A proposal is made for a new paradigm of pastoral care, provided by members of the local faith community with and for one another. Following an examination of the traditional, clinical paradigm of care and recent proposals for alternative methods, a new model of care is presented. This method of care is enacted through multiple approaches, each of them a familiar aspect of “doing church” that has been reimagined for this purpose. Chief among them are teaching, preaching, liturgy and ritual, and engagement with programs of awareness building and activism. A program of adult formation seminars and additional events held within a parish is described which focused on the subject of climate change. The program was designed to initiate this paradigm of care within the parish and to understand better the potentials of this approach.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“There are times when I just feel overwhelmed. So much is wrong with the world and I can’t imagine how we will ever fix it all. I don’t even know where to start.”

“What a mess we have made! And we are leaving it all to our children to deal with. What will their lives be like?”

“I am so tired of hearing about the problems of the world. Nothing ever seems to change. It just gets worse.”

Voices of parishioners

These comments, and many more like them, arose during parish conversations about major issues in the world today. They are probably familiar to anyone who engages in discussions of challenging, global problems. Informed people carry with them many concerns, and the news media move from news cycle to news cycle, always highlighting the next crisis, the new distressing statistics, and the forecasts of doom and gloom. The range of problems that cause us anxiety and distress is enormous, from unemployment and wage stagnation to “loose nukes” and nuclear proliferation; from the cost and availability of health care to firearms control and weapon-free churches; from overpopulation to food security. The list goes on and on. In each case the problems are complex and have been a long time in the making. Solutions are hard to imagine and our American body politic generally seems to lack the will to address difficult issues. In many cases those who suffer the most from the impacts of these issues have the fewest resources and the least access to political remedies for their suffering. The result for

many people seems inevitably to be feelings of being overwhelmed, of lost hopes and visions for change, with a growing conviction that as individuals we can have little impact at all on such large, intractable issues. That we experience these issues simultaneously and carry them with us together greatly increases their cumulative impacts, and their long-term lack of resolution breeds frustration and cynicism within us. At the same time, they usually operate “in the background” of our minds and souls, often without our conscious awareness of the effects they are having.

Not surprisingly, the secular press has observed this widespread social situation. For example the New York Times *Opinionator*, an online column of arts and opinion essays, launched a series entitled “Anxiety” in January, 2012.¹ It invited submissions and included opportunities for the readers to respond. The series garnered unanticipated levels of response. Eventually totaling more than seventy featured pieces and receiving many hundreds of reader comments, the series officially ended in July, 2013. And yet, submissions continue to be received with publication ongoing under the “Anxiety” column label to this day.

Among all of the important challenges that contribute to our current anxieties, the greatest issue of our time is climate change. We hear about it daily and our growing knowledge of it is always with us, even if our concern usually lies slightly beneath our active awareness. As with many other issues we face, the types of personal crises that call upon conventional pastoral care and counseling rarely emerge as a result of this issue.

¹ The initial article launching the series, Daniel Smith, “It’s Still the Age of Anxiety. Or Is It?” can be found in *New York Times*, January 14, 2012, accessed February 14, 2016, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/14/its-still-the-age-of-anxiety-or-is-it/#more-118143>.

Yet, our minds, bodies and souls are affected by the sheer weight of the fear, guilt and despair we carry.

We have many coping strategies (conscious or unconscious) for this issue. We may choose to avert our gaze, refusing to look at climate change too closely for fear of what we will discover. Alternatively, we may actively deny that the problem even exists, taking refuge in the spurious claims of contrarian voices that claim expertise and contradict the established facts. However we respond, we often experience frustration, anger, loss of hope and a resulting inability to act. We may believe that we can contribute very little to meaningful solutions or that the crisis is too far developed for any workable intervention to be successful. What is needed is an approach to providing pastoral care that can help to liberate us from the impacts of these anxieties and concerns, enabling a balanced perspective and supporting positive action to address the problems effectively.

This thesis responds to my conviction that our familiar methods of providing pastoral care offer little prospect for relieving the anxiety and discomfort caused by large-scale global problems, such as climate change. It explores a newly envisioned model of pastoral care that may be practiced by parish groups and similar communities. By freshly conceiving nearly every aspect of church life as an opportunity for mutual pastoral care and by providing teaching and practice in doing so, we may endeavor to increase the health and wholeness of both individual parish members and the church community as a whole.

I also propose, as a demonstration case, an integrated approach to implementing this model of mutual pastoral care using our traditional approaches to life as a faith community as a means of caring for one another.

Social and Professional Location

This thesis has been produced in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry and so its focus is on pastoral care practice in a ministry setting. Therefore, an acknowledgement of my social location and the contexts in which I have served is necessary to clarify further the basis for this work.

I am a white, middle-aged, Episcopal priest born and educated in the U.S. and currently serving in the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. I was initially trained in pastoral care practice through the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, which has been the primary means of preparation for parish clergy in the Episcopal Church and many other denominations for several generations. Prior to my arrival at my first parish position, I served as Episcopal Chaplain on the staff at Dartmouth/Mary Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) in Lebanon, New Hampshire. DHMC is a major regional teaching and research hospital affiliated with Dartmouth Medical School. These two aspects of my pastoral care training and experience are relevant because they expose several points of departure (if not outright biases) in my reading and analysis of the pastoral care literature. Having been trained in the dominant model of pastoral caregiving in the U.S. and having direct clinical experience in medical facilities means that I read the literature from a natural inclination toward this style of practice. It should be noted that,

also because of this, my cultural and pastoral viewpoint is predominantly North American, although the CPE approach to pastoral care has been widely adopted in Europe and elsewhere. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, the CPE model is highly informed by the clinical practice of medicine and by the social sciences. It is practiced mostly within institutional contexts such as churches, hospitals and nursing homes and is dominated by models that value and empower “professionalized” caregivers. In short, all of this is what I know best, and have practiced for some time.

It is also worth noting that in my ministry I regard the liturgical and governance practices of the Episcopal Church as central touchstones of parish life and pastoral care practice.

There are, however, several aspects of my cultural and professional location that expand and enrich some of these points of view. First, I often call upon my personal experiences of discrimination and challenge as a gay man who came to adulthood during a period in which the widespread acceptance of LGBTQ people, and our even more recent legal protections, were only beginning to emerge.

Second, my formal theological education and training for ordination at Episcopal Divinity School benefited greatly from the seminary’s dedicated emphasis on the formal anti-oppression and anti-racism training contained within the core curriculum, as well as the pervasive multicultural perspectives so intentionally taught there.

Third, I enjoyed a previous career of nearly twenty-five years, during which I designed highly context-sensitive cultural and educational organizations (such as museums, public and private cultural institutions, and independent graduate schools)

throughout the U.S. and abroad. This provided practical experience in working with clients and colleagues in a number of social, religious and cultural settings, including in the Middle East and in Southeast Asia.

Finally, and very importantly, I have long experience working beside very capable and effective lay pastoral caregivers, who bring many different types of preparation and experience to their work. This has proven to be an especially important counterbalance to the CPE model of the professionalized caregiver, showing me how very well lay people can serve one another in providing pastoral care.

Ministerial Context

This thesis is also deeply shaped by my pastoral caregiving experiences in two significantly different Episcopal parishes. From 2010-14, I served as Associate Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Concord, New Hampshire. At that time it was the largest parish in the diocese, located in the state capital directly across the street from the State House. St. Paul's served (and continues to serve) as an informal pro-cathedral for the diocese within a community context which places the parish near the epicenter of debate over many political, social justice and public policy issues. St. Paul's operates several major programs for the indigent, the homeless and refugees in and near Concord. These include a major food pantry, a clothing bank, a thrift shop and a prescription medication assistance program. During my tenure there, those outreach programs operated under my direct oversight.

With approximately 700 members (with many older parishioners) and with a sub-regional hospital, continuing care and hospice facilities in Concord, our pastoral care ministry was significantly larger than the clergy could possibly sustain without assistance. Therefore, we developed “ministries of presence” involving a variety of different types of visiting and caregiving by some fifteen or more lay care providers. It was my responsibility to oversee these lay ministries, providing training and ongoing spiritual and pastoral support to them in their own work.

In late 2013, I was called to serve as Rector of The Memorial Church of the Prince of Peace in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The parish was founded to serve as a permanent memorial to those who fought in the horrific Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863) for both the Union and Confederate armies. Located within the Historic District in Gettysburg, the parish has a highly visible location within a unique small town (with a population of less than 8,000) that nonetheless receives about 1.5 million visitors annually. Gettysburg is also home to Gettysburg College (an undergraduate liberal arts institution), The Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg (one of the major seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and a branch of the regional Harrisburg Area Community College system.

Prince of Peace is a smaller parish than St. Paul’s, with about 225 members and an average Sunday attendance of around 100. Mirroring the demography of the town and nearby region, the parish is almost entirely white, with a wide range of educational attainment, household income and political points of view. Still, the overall feel of the parish is informed most by its historical surroundings and the small, college town

ambiance. The church is visited frequently by tourists and participates in a program of historical church tours in town.

Gettysburg is the location of a community hospital that is the site of a CPE program, and several major medical centers including Johns Hopkins and the Medical Centers of the Penn State Medical College are located within about a 50-mile radius. A popular retirement destination, the nearby area contains a number of retirement and continuing care facilities. For all of these reasons, pastoral care considerations are a central concern for the parish. A total of ten lay caregivers serve the parish and the larger community in various roles.

In addition, Prince of Peace has a very large heart for social service and justice issues. The parish currently houses a year-round, daily community soup kitchen and a summer enrichment and feeding program for lower-income elementary school children. Prince of Peace is a Covenant Church with Habitat for Humanity and houses guests that participate in a cold weather temporary homeless shelter program. It is designated as a Jubilee Parish by the diocese and the national church for its extensive outreach and community service efforts. Prince of Peace parishioners are also very committed volunteers in many other ecumenical and social service programs. An active member of Prince of Peace will observe, frequently, the impacts of social justice, economic and environmental issues on the lives of those whom we serve. This tends, in my view, both to sensitize our parishioners to these impacts and to contribute to the emotional and spiritual weight of the issues on their lives. All of these factors make care for this small

portion of the Body of Christ an ongoing concern if we are to remain healthy, dedicated and proactive in our service to God.

Methodology

As both an academic discipline and as a component of seminary pedagogy, pastoral care is a topic subsumed under the larger category of practical theology. Other areas in this diverse category of theological activity include homiletics, religious education and religious leadership. In some settings, practical theology may also include studies of worship, spirituality and ethics. Primary concerns of practical theology include theories of practice, descriptions of action and, increasingly, understandings of how groups of individuals may be “formed by and for practice.”² In this sense, the shaping of the body (for example a parish congregation) through shared experience and practice is an important area of interest within the discipline and of particular interest in this thesis.

Practical theology (including pastoral care) is also exhibiting an increasing engagement with social, political and environmental issues, where once the focus had been primarily on “cure” of the individual soul. Barbara McClure cites three important trends in this respect. First is a move away from the traditional model of care for an individual, as provided by a trained and ordained professional. Rather, a new interest is developing in the models of care *for* the members of a community, and *by* the members of that community. Second, McClure notes a movement from pastoral care as a private

² Ted A. Smith, “Theories of Practice” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester, U.K., Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 250-51.

theological enterprise toward one that entails a more public theology. Finally, she cites “strategic participation” in addressing social, political or other issues, rather than personal insight alone, as a final goal.³

The method chosen for this study is shaped by these concerns of the discipline, even as it responds to pastoral care needs experienced in the ministerial context from which it arises. The method consists of four basic elements. First, an issue is observed in the experience of the community. In this case, that issue is the observed, cumulative impacts of the large, diffuse and seemingly intractable problems described above on the emotional and spiritual lives of parishioners.

Second, an action is conceived to address the issue that has been identified. This thesis hinges upon the idea that a new approach to pastoral care will be required because the nature of the issues and the way they present themselves cannot be effectively addressed through our familiar, established practices.

Third, once the action is conceived, a study of the relevant literature and, especially, emerging new conceptual frameworks, actions and practices is undertaken. In this case, our understanding of the origins and biases of the familiar model of pastoral care is broadened by the insights of those who “push back” against those traditional practices. These new perspectives come from a variety of sources including insights and reflections from practitioners of the traditional model, as well as African-American, feminist, womanist, postmodern and creation-oriented theologians and practitioners. Additionally, because the idea for this new approach to pastoral care involves many

³ Barbara McClure, “Pastoral Care” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, 274-77.

aspects of “doing church,” a range of approaches and understandings to those component activities was also researched.

Fourth, the newly conceived action, now informed and modified by those investigations, is put into practice so as to observe its potential for effectively meeting the needs that have been identified. In the case of this thesis, a coordinated program of teaching, liturgy and ritual, preaching, theological reflection and case study was designed and conducted to begin an ongoing process of forming the community to serve one another in this way. This program focused on one of the most significant and disturbing problems of our time, climate change.

Finally, having observed the impacts of the newly conceived action in its intended setting, a reflection on its potential effectiveness as an approach to pastoral care for this purpose is offered, as are further opportunities for supporting actions and future directions to be investigated.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized to reflect the method used in its development. The observed situation that resulted in the conception of this project has been described in this Introduction.

In Chapter Two, an extensive survey of the literature of pastoral care is summarized, emphasizing the positive contributions of the dominant model and the counterproposals that continue to emerge.

In Chapter Three, specific elements of congregational practice, proposed for use in addressing the spiritual and emotional impacts of climate change, are investigated with an eye to incorporating them in new ways to support community pastoral care.

Chapter Four then describes an integrated, multi-modal program for introducing this widely ranging practice to the parish I lead. Included is a specific, illustrative case study about climate change and some of the concepts taught and exercises conducted. Supporting didactic materials, including an example sermon, liturgical and ritual designs and other teaching documents are included as appendices to this Chapter. A concluding reflection is offered on the program as it was conducted and some other approaches to reinforcing and extending the practice within the parish that are emerging at this time.

Chapter 2

FAMILIAR AND EMERGING PRACTICES OF PASTORAL CARE

This chapter lays the foundation for the development of a new practice of pastoral care. It begins by grounding that work in an appreciation of the origins of our current pastoral care practices and then draws upon new approaches that are emerging. The chapter is in large part a summary of an extensive search of the academic literature that has been influential in the field over the past half century. First, the traditional model and concepts of pastoral care that are relevant to this thesis project are explored. This is followed by an examination of the critiques of the dominant, clinical pastoral care model that have arisen over the past quarter century. Finally, several emerging directions for pastoral care, including especially those related to pastoral care in, for, and by communities are presented.⁴

Defining Pastoral Care

A comparison of two definitions of pastoral care, both published since 1990, provides important observations. *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, published in 1990, offers this definition:

⁴ It should be noted that certain types of pastoral care are not directly considered in this project and so are not extensively summarized in this chapter. These include one-on-one pastoral care and counseling (except as they represent the norm in pastoral care practice generally) and pastoral care provided in times of localized natural disasters.

[Pastoral Care is] any form of personal ministry to individuals and to family and community relationships by representative religious persons (ordained and lay) and by their communities of faith, who understand and guide their caring efforts out of a theological perspective rooted in a tradition of faith.⁵

The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, an updated version of the previous *Dictionary*, released by the same publisher for use by students and practitioners (2010) provides this definition:

In contemporary American usage, “pastoral care” usually refers, in a broad and inclusive way, to all pastoral work concerned with the support and nurturance of persons and interpersonal relationships, including everyday expressions of care and concern that may occur in the midst of various pasturing activities and relationships.⁶

Although the audiences for the two volumes were slightly different, these definitions point to some significant shifts in understanding of the practices of pastoral care that developed over a period of only about twenty years. The earlier definition focuses on “personal ministry” and names the theological perspective of a faith tradition as the basis of care. The later definition is far less specific in that it does not name either “representative religious persons (ordained and lay)” or “their communities of faith,” and makes no mention of theological underpinnings. However, it does introduce the explicit language of relationship into the definition. These shifts in definition point to important areas of critique and reassessment of the dominant models of pastoral care that have important implications for this thesis.

⁵ G. R. Evans and John W. O’Malley, *A History of Pastoral Care* (London: Cassell, 2000), 385.

⁶ Glenn H. Asquith, *The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 22.

Mid- to Late-Twentieth Century Pastoral Care: The Dominant Clinical Model

For reasons which are fairly clear in retrospect, the systems of pastoral care giving which arose in the U.S. and were later promulgated throughout the Western world in the mid-Twentieth century reflected the clinical settings from which they arose. The clinical model, especially as taught through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs, sought to instill practical pastoral skills, many of which can be still be highly valued and useful today. However, the focus on a professionalized care giver and a single care receiver and is subject to reconsideration as new needs for care, new dimensions of care and new mechanisms for its provision are identified.

In the mid-1920's, four American pastoral care practitioners conceived and promulgated a new approach to understanding the tasks and skills of pastoral care and training others in their methods. Anton Boisen and his students Richard Cabot, Philip Guiles and Russell Dicks founded the Clinical Pastoral Education movement and set about training seminarians and pastors in their methods. Boisen's original insights were gained as a result of his personal history of severe mental illness (he was hospitalized repeatedly for extended periods) and Dicks' experience of severe tuberculosis also helped to shape the model.⁷ This may partially explain why, at least initially, CPE was heavily pathology-oriented and exclusively located in mental and general hospital settings.⁸

⁷ John Patton, "Introduction to Modern Pastoral Theology in the United States," in *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 50-55.

⁸ In this regard, the development of the CPE movement has interesting parallels to the early years of psychoanalysis. Freud developed his general theories of human

Later, the CPE movement was influenced by Carl Rogers' psychological theories that emphasized a positive psychological and emotional state of wholeness that might be sought by those who were not suffering severe crisis. Rogers' positive, morally neutral regard for the individual was eventually absorbed within CPE practice.⁹

Theological Reflection and the Cycle of Care

A central feature of CPE is the use of various descriptions of a "cycle of care." This is a methodology that regards care giving and theological reflection as an iterative and evolving process. Usually depicted diagrammatically, a well-developed version is presented by Emmanuel Lartey and is diagrammed as shown in Figure 1.¹⁰

The cycle describes a process by which an initial "experience" (generally, a "clinical" encounter or event) is first analyzed for its "situational" or non-theological content. The relevant facts of the encounter and of its context are ascertained, and perhaps confirmed if necessary. Also when necessary, information, techniques and insights from a wide range of other disciplines (such as medicine, psychology, law and many others) may be appropriated.

Then, in the "theological praxis" stage, relevant biblical, theological and/or doctrinal concepts are identified and allowed to interrogate the original experience, most often by analogy. These elements of theological praxis are, in turn, questioned by the

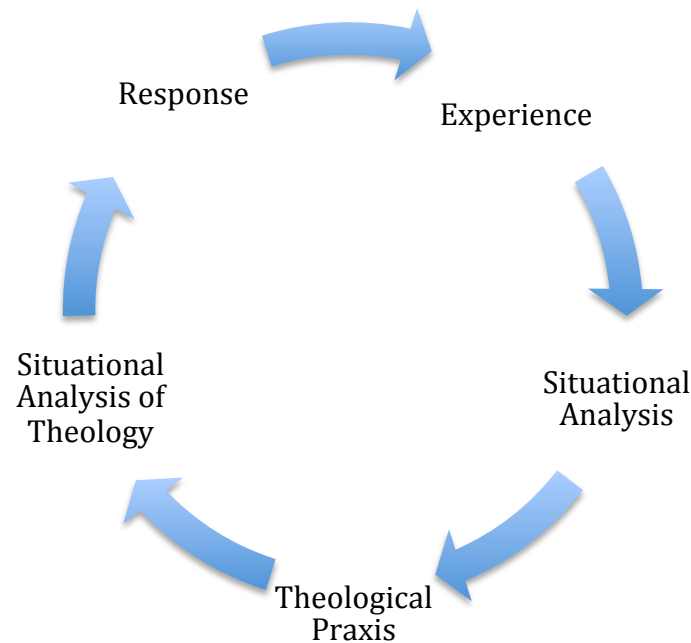
psychological mechanisms based largely on his clinical experience with individuals in psychological crisis.

⁹ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, "Practical Theology as a Theological Form," in *Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, and John Patton (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 130-33.

¹⁰ Ibid., 132.

experience and the previous situational analysis, in anticipation that new theological understandings and formulations might arise.

Figure 1: Emmanuel Lartey's Diagram of the Pastoral Cycle of Care



The resulting “response” is most often a description of options for a course of action for the next encounter with the care receiver, involving the theological perspectives and situational content that have been developed. Although the diagram appears to be both unidirectional and finite, in use the process may flow back and forth between stages, and may be repeated indefinitely as further caregiving encounters or events provide fresh experiences for examination in this way.

The pastoral cycle of care has served as a well-organized way of imparting the skills of deep listening and self-monitoring that are taught in CPE, as well as providing practice in drawing upon biblical and theological sources for reflection and for setting general directions for care. Because it is adaptable and can be applied in highly creative

ways, this pastoral cycle of care technique can, in fact, be useful in other models of caregiving as well. It also holds potential as a method of theological reflection upon events that are not necessarily related to pastoral care, such as current events and community issues.

I believe that the lasting positive legacies of the CPE movement are important to appreciate. First, the pastoral skill of deep listening and a formal understanding of the potential impacts and limitations of the caregiver's own person remain consistently important in caregiving, regardless of practice orientation.

Second, CPE training often takes place within a group of students with diverse cultural, denominational and educational backgrounds. The dialogical nature of the training serves well to broaden theological, social and cultural insights into caregiving.

Third, structured methods of theological reflection are often useful, both for the care givers and for the care receivers as well.

Rising Criticisms of the Dominant Approach to Pastoral Care

By the mid-1960s, this dominant model began to elicit constructive reevaluation and a substantive rethinking along four major aspects of practice. The model typically relied upon a hierarchical relationship between a professional practitioner and the care receiver. It placed a strong focus on personal growth as a mostly individual pursuit. It adopted the morally neutral stance maintained by secular practitioners of psychotherapy and counseling. And, it practiced strongly held values of unconditional acceptance and non-directive methods.

As summarized by Ian Bunting, the dominant model began to come under critical reappraisal beginning in the post-World War II period. This rethinking rose from the major perspectives generated by the horrors of WWII. The inescapable presence of sin, evil and human brokenness, revealed in wartime, challenged the previously held positive, optimistic view of human potential which had dominated pastoral care and counseling practice.

A “pendulum swing” of reaction began, away from a focus on morally neutral personal development and toward greater concern for the morality of personal action. This reestablished ethical concerns as central to the care giving relationship, along with such mechanisms as confession and restitution. Bunting, in his summary, references Don Browning’s view that, “...too much attention has been paid to a therapeutic concern about what sort of person one should *be*, and insufficient attention has been given to what one should *do*.”¹¹

A third area of ongoing criticism responds to a declining theological orientation within the disciplines of pastoral care and counseling in general for the reasons cited above, as well as less reliance upon the historical wisdom of the church as touchstones for the practice.

A fourth critique addresses the bias in favor of professionalism, which is seen as breeding an overreliance on the skills of “professionalized helpers” to the detriment of the corporate, social and political dimensions of local pastoral care and counseling...”¹²

¹¹ Ian D. Bunting, “Pastoral Care at the End of the Twentieth Century,” in Evans and O’Malley, *History of Pastoral Care* (London: Cassell, 2000), 389.

¹² *Ibid.*, 390.

As the turn of the century approached, Bunting wrote of a “convergence” of pastoral care with other strains of the Christian practice. These included a tendency of those desiring care to approach spiritual guides where, previously, a secular therapist might have been sought, and the reemergence of an emphasis on the spiritual life with a renewal of the historic practices of spiritual direction as an element of care.¹³

Clinebell described the 2011 revision of his classic text *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling* as offering “an evolutionary guiding image that is more multidimensional, holistic, growth centered, systemic, multicultural, and liberation oriented, reflecting insights of nondominant groups such as women and racial/ethnic minority caregivers.”¹⁴ Clearly, some major readjustments to the pastoral care paradigm were underway.

Emerging Directions from within the Mainstream

Stephen Pattison has published extensive criticism of the dominant clinical model, but even more comprehensively, he is a critic of modern corporate structures, the tyranny of management (and by extension, caregiving) according to aims and objectives, and a world view that he terms “managerialism.” Pattison summarized his view of the “modern, managed, aims and objectives focused organization” saying that such an organization is

¹³ Somewhat paradoxically, Bunting also notes that one result of this return to spiritual direction methods has been a move to professionalize the training and even the credentialing of spiritual directors, mirroring the professionalization of pastoral care giving which has drawn significant criticism.

¹⁴ Howard John Clinebell and Bridget Clare McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 44-45.

“despite the rhetoric of enterprise, creativity and innovation, surprisingly conservative. Its narrow, instrumental view of people and of reality excludes much that is of value in human experience while it is wildly over-optimistic in its view of controlling the future.”¹⁵

A significant step toward an alternative approach was taken with his proposal to reassert the theological bases for pastoral care as a religious activity, by acknowledging “some liberating symbolic insights of theological resistance.” He developed fifteen “theological perceptions” that might be included in a theologically-based vision of pastoral care. Three of the most promising of Pattison’s proposals for this project are: “life, truth and salvation in their most authentic forms do not come from above, but from below; people are called to be children of God and brothers and sisters of one another; and we are all in it together.” These three theological propositions provide a strong suggestion that the work of caring for one another can be mutual, communal and relational.

A second group of five theological propositions includes these: “life is a mystery; life is complex, and can be amazingly bounteous and generous; surprise is possible; we are on a journey to the future which is necessarily mostly unknown; and successful outcomes are not the sole, or even the most important measure of human endeavor.” This group of propositions stands in strong contrast to the underlying (if unspoken) assumption of the clinical model that *as clinicians* we are in some sense in control of the outcomes of care – and that we can recognize those outcomes as resulting directly from the provision of care.

¹⁵ Stephen Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology: Selected Essays* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), 99.

Finally, four of Pattison's proposals are especially applicable to the subject of climate change, which is used as a demonstration case study for this thesis. The first, "creation is a whole, and a very large whole" is followed by, "the creation does not belong to any one person or group of people." Then follows "humans are not in control of creation and, finally, "the spirit of life is everywhere." With these four proposals, Pattison offers a rare concept of pastoral care that is located within a much larger context (or, really, contexts) than the immediate "locations" of a caregiver and care receiver. He also explicitly honors a theology of creation that is central.

Pattison offers his proposal of these "perceptions" as a means by which pastoral care can be practiced as a symbolic and symbolizing activity with unknowable and often surprising outcomes. In Pattison's view, meaning-making within symbolic systems is a unique function of religion. Therefore, pastoral care proceeding from symbolism, myth and theological insight provides a viable and necessary counterproposal to a creeping tendency to both define and evaluate pastoral care in terms of rationally conceived, observable goals and outcomes.¹⁶ As we will also see, this opens the door to a reconceptualization of liturgy and ritual as explicitly pastoral activities, operating within the realm of symbolism and myth.

Emerging Theological Directions for Pastoral Care from New Voices

Further challenges to the dominant clinical model have been voiced by feminist, womanist and African-American theologians. They share the recognition that the therapeutic means traditionally employed (such as the theologies, models of personal

¹⁶ Ibid., 101-4.

development and the power dynamics of caregiving) are male-dominant, reflective of the Western mind and culturally specific. When informed by postcolonial perspectives, many of the most familiar practices of caregiving, such as the professionalized, one-on-one, unidirectional therapeutic relationship may be seen as devaluing mutual care, community coherence and local culture.

Bonnie J. McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern wrote of a confluence of multi-dimensional contexts around issues of pastoral care. They cited as especially important several overlapping realms: public policy (especially in the health care field); new readings of history and other feminist/womanist/post-colonial and immigrant studies; and congregational studies, including the increasing social demands on local congregations and a decline in the reliance on ordained clergy across many denominations. Further, they noted the growing interest (especially among feminists) in ecology and the ways in which ecological concerns and care of people overlap.¹⁷

Of particular importance to this thesis is their fundamental shift of attention from a focus on the individual toward the formulation of “congregational care.” These theologians move toward more interconnected views of all human activity, especially care giving. Pictured variously as webs of care, or as an ecology of care, this shift also highlights the importance to feminist theologians of addressing systems, whether they are social systems or systems found within more intimately connected participants.¹⁸

¹⁷ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern, *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 19-20.

¹⁸ Kathleen J. Greider, Gloria A. Johnson and Kristen Jane Leslie, “Three Decades of Women Writing for our Lives,” in Miller-McLemore and Gill-Austern, *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 45-46.

Carrie Doehring places all of these considerations within a framework of post-modern approaches to knowledge. Returning to Asquith for definitions, postmodern thought emphasizes a relational and ecological understanding of life and an understanding of knowledge as socially constructed. He also notes a self-reflexivity about how one's social location and social privileges shape one's experience and knowledge. Addressing pastoral care even more specifically, he describes as post-modern a social, political and theological analysis of the role of power and difference in human suffering and injustice, and the construction of systematic strategies for pastoral and spiritual care in which individual, familial, and communal change is grounded in social justice.¹⁹ We should note here that each point of Asquith's definition finds expression in Pattison's proposals, the evolution of Clinebell's thought and the summary of feminist/womanist concerns provided by Miller-McLemore and Gill-Austern.

In her concern with post-modernism, Doehring prefers to de-emphasize the hierarchical structure of the professional caregiver and the care receiver in favor of care in, of and by the community. Such care respects fluid structures of power and authority, moving toward a model of caregiving that is asymmetrical in terms of roles and responsibilities but recognizes a mutuality of subjective experience.²⁰ Drawing upon Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore's image (or "map") of human activity as a "living human

¹⁹ Asquith, *The Concise Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 72.

²⁰ Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 24. She also advocates for embrace of messiness, ambiguity, improvisation, indeterminacy and fluidity as both a method and an outcome; and she understands that human experience is imbedded within and completely interdependent with all of creation.

web”²¹ Doebling proposes pastoral care approaches that acknowledge a thorough interconnectedness of human life and activity and which expect fluid transitions of power derived from responsibility, free from predetermined, static hierarchy.²²

Speaking even more directly to the subject of pastoral caregiving, Margaret Kornfeld emphasizes the centrality of the community in the actual process of care giving – so much so that she substitutes the concept of “counselors in community” for the more traditional, individual caregiver, who most often is an ordained professional. In her 1998 book, *Cultivating Wholeness*, she writes:

Much pastoral theory and technique involves one-to-one, and sometimes couple or family, situations. However, in faith communities it is not only the religious or lay professional who supports change. The community itself also heals, or, if it is dysfunctional, harms. Caregivers, counselors, and all who are mindful of concern need to understand the characteristics of a healing community and have need [for] skills to help the community develop its potential for supporting life.²³

Insights and Imperatives Arising from Globalization

Major issues have arisen in tandem with rapid globalization, as broadly defined. These include global warming; overpopulation; widespread starvation and epidemic disease; cultural, political and economic oppression of women; global systems of production and trade; widespread, chronic unemployment and many others. All produce the need for theological responses and supportive caregiving for individuals and communities.

²¹ Robert C. Dykstra, *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 40-46.

²² Doebling, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, 24.

²³ Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 10-18.

In contrast to Doehring, John Reader writes that the impacts and ethics of globalization have supplanted post-modernity as the primary dialogical partner with practical theology.²⁴ Reader's work reveals a range of reactions and adaptations to global phenomena. For example, he notes that conceiving the self as "consumer" has many implications, not least of which are the impacts of large-scale patterns of consumption on global economics, global ecology and global politics.²⁵ When coupled with the questions of personal identity and personal responses to globalization, the ethical questions faced by individuals (as well as their perceived or real inabilities to act upon global ethical questions in meaningful ways) evoke the needs for the types of pastoral care at the individual, family and community levels that are the subject of this project.

The Human Creature as Relational and Moral

Peggy Way takes a balanced view of the issues arising from the dominant, clinical model. She finds virtue in the cultivation of skills of deep listening, the honoring of story and narrative, and the development of an ability of the caregiver to stay "out of the way" of the care receiver's needs as positive contributions both to civil discourse, generally, and to the wellbeing of those in need of care. She advocates, however, for a broader understanding of care as resisting "...neat categorizations of acts of care from acts of justice, or of concern for the particular leaving out the broader issues, or vice versa."²⁶

²⁴ John Reader, *Reconstructing Practical Theology: The Impact of Globalization* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 49.

²⁵ Ibid., 40-44.

²⁶ Peggy Way, *Created by God: Pastoral Care for all God's Creatures* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 118.

Way consistently argues for the development of communities that are free from divisive language and images and for a moral viewpoint focused on joy. She refuses to identify history with evil and rejects foundational viewpoints that identify malevolence and violence as the underpinnings of human society.

Another way of shifting pastoral care to a central image of relationality is to draw upon the Trinity as a model that can both inspire and empower all human endeavors. Neil Pembroke has written eloquently of the two central Trinitarian dynamics – *kenosis* and *perichoresis* – and the ways in which they might guide provision of care and the development of community.

Kenosis points to the fact that authentic relational life requires an emptying of the self in order to be receptive to the other. It also speaks to our relationship with God. If we are to participate in God's grace, we need to make space for divine action in our lives. *Perichoresis*, mutual indwelling, refers to the fact that there is both closeness and open space in the triune God... The divine persons form a unity in love, but if there were no distance in their relational life their particularity would be lost. Similarly, in the Christian community it is importance to balance intimacy and unity with respect for individuality and personal freedom.²⁷

Here we can observe the same sort of balancing of the particular and the communal that we noted in Miller-McLamore's call for the individual subject to be located in the web, and in Way's admonition not to relinquish either the particular case or the broader issues. The explicit use of Trinitarian language in this context is also a

²⁷ Neil Pembroke, *Renewing Pastoral Practice: Trinitarian Perspectives on Pastoral Care and Counselling* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 43.

positive move toward reintroduction of theology into the care giving paradigms, as called for most explicitly by Pattison, Doebling and Way.²⁸

A recently published contribution to this literature is in many ways also the most hopeful for finding new directions for care related to global issues. The 2011 edition of Clinebell's *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling* includes a considerably expanded chapter discussing ethical, meaning and value issues in care. Clinebell identifies ethical caregiving as intimately engaged with fostering reconciliation through the traditional means of discipline (as in priestly admonition and church discipline) and forgiveness through confession, penance and absolution.²⁹ We should note that these are the same moral frameworks that caregivers earlier tended to abandon under the influence of the value-neutral positions of secular therapy and counseling.

While he agrees that ethical commitments “begin by thinking globally and acting locally” he also is realistic enough to note that “...on this shrinking planet with increasing interconnections, such commitments must also be expressed by taking action in the wider quadrants of people’s world – regional, national and even global. Environmental issues like global warming and the population explosion cannot be resolved on local and even national levels.” Clinebell also identifies the impacts of vast disparities in wealth, starvation, epidemics and the oppression of women as requiring global ethics, instilled in

²⁸ It might also be noted that this readiness to hold a position and its opposite (or balancing concerns for the individual within care for the community) in creative tension within a single system is well suited to traditional Anglican understandings of theology, doctrine and polity.

²⁹ Clinebell and McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 243-51.

individuals and communities, as part of an overall caregiving strategy supporting wholeness and “life in its fullness.”

Moving Forward

Two understandings of pastoral care are central to this thesis. The first is an appreciation for the contributions of the dominant (CPE) model of pastoral care. It has contributed very useful skills and values to the pastoral care enterprise. These are, most notably, a dedication to the skills of deep listening; an appreciation of the impacts of the social locations of those in the caregiving relationship; the group-centered, dialogical model of training that is used; and the usefulness of structured methods of theological reflection. In the development of community pastoral care practice that follows we will continue to rely on these skills and values and will seek means to inculcate them in new ways.

As the dominant clinical model of pastoral care has been critiqued from within the mainstream of its own practitioners and new voices have joined the conversation, we recognize a confluence between the global problems of our day and the emerging directions for pastoral care. This will be central to finding a way forward in our quest for a pastoral care approach that addresses the deep-seated anxieties provoked by those same global issues.

The expanded conversation brings us to a new understanding of pastoral care as a communal effort. Several important themes have emerged. These include a broadening recognition of the critical importance of both the local context of caregiving and the

larger communities in which care is provided. There is also a new understanding of the need for greater fluidity in both caregiving structures and expectations about the outcomes of care. Of particular interest to this project, there is also increased resistance to the separation of care needs from justice issues and a gradually awakening awareness of pastoral care needs in support of spiritual wholeness and reconciliation of relationships.

These are the new hallmarks of a pastoral care paradigm that can address the needs of our communities. This work now turns toward discovering the ways and means to enact communal pastoral care.

Chapter 3

LITURGY, RITUAL AND PREACHING TO SUPPORT PASTORAL CARE IN COMMUNITY

Gathering the faithful for the enactment of liturgy is a central act for every faith community. The cyclical rhythms of the church year, pastoral offices that mark life's passages and rituals designed for special events or commemorations are reasons for gathering and also are defining events for much of the community's life together. As we consider the community care of souls in broad context, the occasions that cause us to gather for a common purpose take on a heightened opportunity for healing and growth. In this chapter, the shapes of liturgical and ritual practice and preaching that can promote well-being are examined and examples of purpose-designed worship will be offered in the next chapter.

Pastoral Care in Sunday Worship

Consideration of a parish's worshipping life naturally begins with Sunday worship. For many congregants, the Sunday experience is their primary, perhaps even their only regular involvement with their faith community. Because this is so often the case, Sunday worship often attempts to fulfill the needs and address the concerns of many people simultaneously. Mark Earey has produced a probing study of the ways in which Sunday worship serves, or fails to serve, the pastoral needs of faith communities. He synthesizes

the work of a number of scholars and clergy into a framework for shaping Sunday worship, in its pastoral modes, toward the service of specific local needs.

Earey proposes several ways in which Sunday worship can provide means of pastoral care for its participants. First, “The most obvious way that worship can care is when there is a clear and explicit mention of particular needs, either pro-actively when the need could be anticipated...or responsively.”³⁰ By “proactively,” Earey means that worship anticipates needs of the community and addresses them through such means as specific prayers, selection of hymns and preaching intended to address those particular issues. Global climate change might be addressed in exactly this explicitly proactive way. Some possibilities include intercessions placed permanently within the parish’s regular Prayers of the People; designated Sunday(s) set aside to focus on the issue; and specifically crafted liturgical units for inclusion within the canon of the Mass. For example, a parish might choose to participate in Interfaith Power and Light’s annual “National Preach In” for Global Warming. This organization encourages preaching and liturgy specific to the issue by coordinating supporting materials, example sermons and advocacy ideas to be used at the local level.

In contrast, a “responsive” approach addresses an un-anticipatable event to which the faith community must respond. In the context of this thesis, examples could include an extreme weather event or a social impact (such as the physical and social impacts of Hurricane Katrina) that has captured the attention of the community or perhaps even impacted it directly. Because these events occur without warning, the challenge they

³⁰ Mark Earey, *Worship that Cares* (London: SCM Press, 2012), 6.

present to the weekly liturgical planning process can be demanding. In such cases, rapid adjustment of the larger liturgical units, selection of hymns and alignment with lectionary texts may or may not be possible in a timely way. Once again, common prayers and preaching may be the most ready means of response. Failure to respond to significant events in a timely way, however, can exact a cost to the community's self-identity and the perceived relevance of its ministries to its members' lives. I directly experienced these impacts when a local parish did not address the terrible massacre of schoolchildren and teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Connecticut in December, 2012. By failing to confront the event on the following Sunday, church leadership was widely criticized and the relevance of that parish's ministry began to be questioned by some. Several members left the church shortly thereafter.

A second means by which worship serves as communal pastoral caring is, in Earey's view, more subtle and less specific to any particular topic or issue. In this category, he includes those familiar, communal activities that foster simple human contact or belonging. Passing the peace, participating in established roles (such as ushering, reading the lections and the like) and even being physically touched are all familiar aspects of worship that serve this purpose. Earey considers that such activities are essential for a true sense of involvement in community, and that worship can be designed in ways that both foster contact and belonging or prevent it from happening at all.³¹ While perhaps not specifically applicable to issues of climate change, these aspects

³¹ Ibid., 7-8.

that promote a sense of belonging support the other work of the liturgy and may be critical if the entire liturgical experience is to have its impact on the participants.

A third way in which communal worship on Sunday can provide a pastoral care component is through the naming of an individual's personal "reality" as a means of recognizing their basic existence and presence within the group. This might be as simple as providing for access to worship that recognizes personal needs (wheel chair accessibility, large print materials) or more identity-oriented (are women active in leadership of the service, is there a diversity of ages visible?). While generally important to the total effectiveness of the liturgy, there may also exist some in the parish with personal experiences of actual direct contact with the impacts of global climate change. Such experience may affect the sense of the relevance of the faith community for individuals and families. For example, parishioners may have witnessed these impacts in their travels, and therefore feel that they are emotionally out-of-sync with the larger group. Or perhaps those whose livelihoods are affected by climate and weather may know the impacts first hand and yet feel unable to express those impacts freely. The experiences of friends and family throughout the world may create a sense that an individual's own reality is somehow not included in the worldview of the larger group.

Closely related is a fourth means of pastoral care in weekly worship proposed by Earey: the meaningful assurance that the participant is included in the worshipping community as "one of us." He provides cautionary insights here. For example, while diversity within the group may be visible, language and assumed norms may communicate, in not very subtle ways, the clear presence of insiders and outsiders, of

“us” and “them” within the congregation. He notes that the jokes told in sermons can establish assumptions about education levels or hetero-normativity that can effectively exclude some from the group’s unspoken norms. Similarly, in another example, prayers “for the poor” project the clear presumption that “they” are somewhere outside of the congregation, rather than participating from within. In such cases, the pastoral sensitivity of the clergy and all who are engaged in planning liturgy is of critical importance.

One way that an insider/outsider dynamic may be unintentionally projected that is directly relevant to climate change issues is the way that assumptions about the political party affiliations or political orientations of individuals are characterized. This may happen either overtly or indirectly. The parishes of the Episcopal Church may contain members of every political orientation, yet the overall posture presented by the denomination and many members is of a progressive political stance on most social issues. More politically or socially conservative members may feel disrespected or even marginalized if they voice their political convictions. In the realm of climate change issues, this may be dramatically manifested in politically charged debates about the validity of the scientific evidence and its interpretation. This presents a special challenge because the vast predominance of credible evidence supports the mainstream interpretation. It is a delicate task to prevent discussions of climate change from rapidly descending into debates about the perceived political agendas operating within the scientific realm and beyond. It is an even more delicate proposition to prevent those with dissenting viewpoints from feeling marginalized or excluded from the community of

faith. Politics and faith are intertwined but difficult to discuss and tease out. Sensitivity of the pastor is critical.

A fifth way in which worship can provide for pastoral care is by allowing for a range of emotional responses. Earey writes, “Many have noticed that one of the weaknesses of worship today is its lack of space for rage, protest or lament.”³² Thus, all people, and particularly people of color and members of other minority groups may feel that their “realities” are not expressed or addressed. He is especially critical of modern worship music that addresses only thankfulness and praise, believing that music and other aspects of liturgy must also address the challenges of faithful living and the difficult circumstances that all people must face. He further cautions against “putting words” in worshipers’ mouths that will tell them what or how they should feel at any given moment.³³

This observation, in some ways, speaks directly to the heart of Sunday worship in the Episcopal Church. The weekly liturgies rely largely on combinations of biblical texts in a rota established by the Revised Common Lectionary. Book of Common Prayer liturgical language rarely expresses rage or lament in visceral terms. With the possible exception of the progressive use of the Psalter through the year, this language may, through long familiarity, have largely lost its power to surprise or confound experienced parishioners. Opening the Episcopal liturgies to more emotive and less familiar language poses challenges that, nonetheless, can be important to the purposes of this thesis. In the

³² Ibid., 9.

³³ See also Neil Pembroke, *Pastoral Care in Worship: Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), Chapters 3 and 4.

search for multiple ways of addressing the issue of global climate change as a path of promoting spiritual and emotional wholeness, the emotional content of our distress certainly must be allowed expression. Finding ways to do this in Sunday worship might be approached in several ways.

One approach may be the creation of more topically specific Eucharistic liturgies as provided for under “An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist” in the 1978 *Book of Common Prayer*, colloquially known as Rite III.³⁴ This open-ended form allows for the composition of liturgical texts and Eucharistic Prayers to serve many purposes. It should be noted that the rubrics specify that this Order and its forms are not intended for the principal Sunday or weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist. However, this admonishment, in practices that have developed over the years since the approval of the current Prayer Book, seems often to be ignored, sometimes with Episcopal approval in advance. The Order allows for re-composition of all of the language and liturgical activity related to the Liturgy of the Word. It instructs that the proclamation and response to the word of God “may include readings, song, talk, dance, instrumental music, other art forms, silence.”³⁵ This provides a wide range of options for the expression of emotion and emotional responses which are more difficult to accomplish using the fixed liturgies. I will discuss this further in chapter 4.

³⁴ Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the use of the Episcopal Church: Together with the Psalter, Or, Psalms of David* [Book of common prayer (1790).] (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1979), 400-5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 400.

Similarly, the liturgy at the Great Thanksgiving provides (especially in Form 2) for re-composition of the proper prefaces and much of the text describing salvation history and praise. The scripture-based words of institution remain fixed, however. In choosing to employ significant changes to the set liturgies of the Prayer Book by using this Order for worship on Sundays, a number of considerations must be balanced. The need for liturgical modification for the purposes described in this thesis must be weighed against the desires of many parishioners to use the old, familiar forms each week. If the practice locally has been never to vary the liturgical approach and the parish is not familiar with more customized liturgies generally, then resistance to change may overshadow the impacts of new liturgical practice. However, given time, careful explanations and preparation of the congregation, such liturgies may play an important role in the overall care of the parish.³⁶

Finally, at times it is necessary for the pastor or preacher actively to challenge those who are participating in worship to examine their own defenses, patterns of denial and unexamined beliefs about themselves and others.³⁷ Earey asks, “How can we move beyond the cozy, to make room for change, growth and transformation?”³⁸ As in all questions related to the Sunday liturgy, the many needs of Sunday worshippers must be balanced, and the tastes and flexibility of parishes vary widely. This topic will be discussed in greater length in the section on preaching that follows.

³⁶ See Chapter 4 for further discussion of the use of “Rite III” in conjunction with the teaching series described there, and Appendix 3 for the text of the Eucharistic prayer composed for that purpose.

³⁷ William H. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979), 63.

³⁸ Earey, *Worship that Cares*, 10.

As discussed above, Earey's observations about Sunday worship inform this thesis in important ways. Yet, the life of the parish extends from Sunday through the rest of the week and the parish's congregants often encounter and inspire other liturgical experiences. In parish formation programs, ongoing devotional groups and activities, campus ministries and many other settings, liturgies both formal and informal can be constructed for many purposes. We turn, therefore, to a more general consideration of ritual and liturgy that may apply to these opportunities, while also addressing some needs that cannot be met through Sunday Worship.

Constructing New Rituals and Liturgies

In her 2009 volume, *Ritual Making, Women Shaping Rites for Changing Lives*, Jan Berry describes the function of rituals in this way:

“Ritual provides a framework in which powerful emotions can be confronted and expressed. It allows participants to enter a space beyond words, where symbols, bodily movement and symbolic action are the vehicles of meaning. It provides a physical and time-limited space, made safe by a structure which provides shape and boundaries to experiences and feelings which can otherwise feel dangerously chaotic and overwhelming.”³⁹

Rituals, therefore, are constructed from building blocks of symbols and their manipulation, symbolic or emotive physical actions, a containing space and a confining time period.

³⁹ Jan Berry, *Ritual Making Women: Shaping Rites for Changing Lives* (London: Equinox, 2009), 2.

An important aspect of rituals is that they may or may not express specific beliefs and may not even employ words in their performance. Mark Earey addresses the way that rituals not only express what we know or feel to be true, but also shape and form those convictions. He notes that sometimes rituals are approached with an assumption of insincerity because they may not seem to be based on a belief system. In contrast to commonly held Christian belief and practice in formal worship, sincere “belief” is not a prerequisite for participation in other types of rituals.⁴⁰ “The perception of insincerity which hangs around ritual finds its roots here in something which is significant; ritual does not depend on pre-existing feelings for its power....Feelings may be part of the bigger picture, but they are not determinative for the [success of a] ritual.”⁴¹ The implication of both Berry’s and Earey’s observations is that ritual actions operate in ways that do not rely on pre-established belief systems or language of either the leader or participants. (It should be noted, on the other hand, that belief or meaning-systems affect how ritual actions are selected and organized.) As means for providing pastoral care between and among parish members, ritual actions have the potential to help transcend the intellectual, political and ideological differences between them.

Two other models of ritual action are of particular interest here. The first is a model of liturgy developed by Gordon Lathrop, a scholar of liturgy working from within the Lutheran tradition. Lathrop contributes an analytic theory of “juxtaposition” from his study of formal Sunday worship and other practices, including daily prayer and the

⁴⁰ One example might be of a fraternity or sorority initiation ritual that marks an occasion only ceremonially, with no “belief” involved beyond a general notion that membership is generally a good or beneficial thing.

⁴¹ Earey, *Worship that Cares*, 22.

overall Christian annual church calendar. Juxtaposition describes the way in which elements of ritual (including liturgy) inform and interact with each other.⁴² An example of this might be a rite that incorporates a biblical story (perhaps the story of God granting dominion over the earth to humankind) with a comparable human situation that is in immediate focus (such as the failure of humans to act as stewards of creation on God's behalf). In such a juxtaposition, each story illuminates human failure by shining upon it the light of God's trust and desire for the wellbeing of the world. Earey further develops this theory of juxtaposition by isolating three principle factors that can inform the design and intentionality of ritual. These factors describe the ways that action, symbol and word may be combined. His first method of combination, "explanation," provides a clear explanation of the meaning of the symbol or action. His illustrative example is of the lighting of a candle accompanied by such words as "I light this candle to symbolize..." There is no ambiguity to the action and little need to ponder the precise intent of the symbol. In a sense, words dominate this ritual action.

A second method of juxtaposition is "reinforcement." Ritual reinforcement is a more powerful method of juxtaposition because it supports a more nuanced or multi-layered interpretation of the action and symbol, requiring in turn more engagement by the person experiencing the ritual in order to explore its depths. Earey gives the example of proclaiming "Jesus is the Light of the world" while lighting a candle. The interaction of word and symbol is less explicitly described and allows for a greater range of meaning

⁴² Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 236.

than the first example. This is because both the language and the ritual action are evocative rather than descriptive.

A final method of juxtaposition is “subversion,” which Earey considers the most powerful of the three. In this approach, the action and symbol may seem to contradict or undermine the apparent meaning of the words. To simplify Earey’s example somewhat, we might light a candle while proclaiming, “The world is full of sorrow, pain and suffering.” What then is the lighting of the candle intended to mean? Sorrow, pain and suffering are not generally associated with light and the symbolism associated with light. So does this light symbolize the Light of Christ, or a movement out of the darkness of pain toward redemption, or something else altogether? In his view, the simultaneous presentation of many possible meanings within the context of an apparent contradiction between symbol, action and word allows the most room for the Holy Spirit to enter into and operate through the ritual.⁴³

During the first half of the 20th century, French anthropologist and ethnographer Arnold van Gennep wrote extensively on the structures and meanings of the rites of passage he observed in many settings. He understood each of these rites (concerning birth, puberty and similar life stages) to mark the transition of a person from one stage or state of life to another. “For every one of these events,” he wrote, “there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined.”⁴⁴ Perhaps more important to this thesis, Van Gennep introduced the concept of “liminality” (from the Latin *limen*, for threshold) to

⁴³ Earey, *Worship that Cares*, 55-57.

⁴⁴ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1960), 3.

describe the passage between these states of being, whether those states are understood as physical or ritualistic. He proposed a three-stage process. The first stage consists of those rites intended to separate the person from their current state or stage (the pre-liminal rites). Arrival at the new stage or role was the third stage (characterized as post-liminal rites). But the middle, transitional state or passage is the one of greatest interest here. It may be seen as that point where the ritual or liturgical action ceases to look backward, to the past or toward what has been lost, and then shifts to the future, looking forward to new realities or possibilities.⁴⁵ Victor Turner provided extensions of van Gennep's three stage model, with a particular emphasis on the middle, liminal state and the ways in which the shared experience of the passage through liminality can form or enhance community.⁴⁶

In actual experience, these three stages often do not seem so clearly defined, or so definitively crossed over or through, as van Gennep himself recognized.⁴⁷ Yet the focus on the transitional state provides insights into the types of ritual that may be effective in helping to process and confront the realities of global climate change. With both the earth and the individual effectively moving through liminal spaces together, the opportunity for evocative metaphor and symbolic action is clearly present. It should be noted that van Gennep's work has been extended by others who have detected some important biases in his observation, including what some feel was a biasing focus on rites of initiation and, especially, male rites of passage. Of particular note is Jan Berry's contention that such

⁴⁵ Earey, *Worship that Cares*, 58.

⁴⁶ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 1969), 94-130.

⁴⁷ van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 11.

tightly defined, categorical steps betray a very male understanding of change and continuity. In her view, more appropriate understandings of ritual passage would also place significant emphasis on gradual transition and continuity.⁴⁸ Even with these caveats understood, van Gennep's simple yet very useful model provides guidance for the structure and detail of new rites and liturgies.

Where might we turn for evocative and multilayered symbols for use in rituals pertaining to global climate change? Baptist scholar Benjamin M. Stewart proposes a series of possibilities in his beautifully written treatise, *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology*. Stewart is determined to break Christian worship and ritual out of what he sees as a relentless anthropocentrism. He has several tactics in mind. In one, he examines the long list of individuals who literally came "into contact" with Jesus and notes their varied conditions. "If we reflect on this list," he writes, "we will notice that many of the bodies – the earth – that Jesus touches are earth that has been thrown out of balance, mistreated, abused or (are) simply suffering for unknown reasons and (are) not whole, not flourishing." He notes that the biblical term "salvation" derives from the Latin *salvus*, "which means health, wholeness, integrity, balance, safety." This presents many opportunities to bring the stories of healing in the New Testament canon into the types of juxtaposition that Earey describes. The salvation of the earth might be seen, therefore, as a large-scale manifestation of the healing power of Jesus, the Great Physician.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Berry, *Ritual Making Women*, 90-94.

⁴⁹ Benjamin M. Stewart, *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 71-76.

Stewart then proceeds to develop close analogies and illustrative stories that connect some of the most familiar Christian symbols to the questions of the wholeness and integrity of the earth. A favorite symbol of Stewart's is water. The water of baptism, oases in the desert, living water, flowing water: these are symbols and metaphors with long familiarity to Christians and non-Christians alike. The possibilities of both reinforcing and subversive juxtapositions (to use Earey's terms once more) are multifold. Images of the creation of the waters of the earth, the changing ocean levels, waters encroaching upon human habitations, the dissolving, cleansing, and erasing powers of water all present opportunities for powerful ritual. The melding of word (including scriptural Word) with powerful action (as in baptism) united by an equally powerful, universal and complex symbol (the water itself) can be evocative, complex and mysterious, all within a single ritual experience.

Equally engaging are the possibilities presented by Stewart's complex appreciation of the relationships between earth (as dirt) and the food we all eat to sustain life. He probes the ritual possibilities of the use of bread in the Eucharist as a connecting link with that earth. He also traces a web of interactive relatedness that connects that earth with the final product on our tables and our altars. He presents many possibilities for ritual observance, such as intentionally varying the altar bread recipes by liturgical season to reflect seasonal crops and moods, and juxtaposing the very real and serious hunger experienced in Jesus' time and place with the hunger for meaning, community and peace in our own.⁵⁰ We might also recall the organization of worship in the early

⁵⁰ Ibid., 59-68.

church and our historical understandings of the origination of the Eucharistic feast in the traditional Jewish Passover meal.

Finally, and inevitably, Stewart addresses the earth as burial place and burial container as we return to that material from which we are formed -- ashes and dust, in the words of both the burial rite and Ash Wednesday observances. Here the possibilities for deeply moving, and possibly deeply disturbing ritual relating to global climate change loom large. The contemplation of large scale biological mortality relates strongly to the sense of our own limited and fragile life spans, and the loss of species and cultures can be terrible to contemplate without the healing and hope that ritual action can engender. Certainly there are truly jarring juxtapositions to be found across and among these symbols. We might contrast, ritually, the stories of the feeding of the five thousand and the starvation induced by drought, deforestation and erosion in a single ritual action. We might further experience the raising of Lazarus in juxtaposition with the loss of polar ice in a large-scale image of hope for a “resurrecting” salvation. It should be remembered, however, that when addressing global climate change through ritual actions, there is a true danger that the images and impacts of the ritual may, in fact, overwhelm where they are intended to heal and inspire.⁵¹ The requirements of responsible and loving ritual design might therefore begin with the famous Hippocratic injunction, “First do no harm.”

Stephen Burns offers some principles on planning for rituals that focus on justice-making. An important concern of this thesis is the pursuit of justice among and between

⁵¹ One good way to avoid overwhelming participants is by limiting the number of layers of association and symbols that are presented in a single ritual. Similarly, simple language and symbols and literal repetition help to keep participants from being overcome by complexity or confusion.

humans and nonhumans alike. Burns notes that the Australian, Canadian and American Prayer Books each most often voice the concepts and terminology of justice in the Prayers of the People, as prayed “in common.” These traditional Prayer Book prayers are understood to be models that may be adapted and extended to suit local needs. On this point Burns raises an important concern: just who are “the people” and, therefore “whose responsibility the exercise of justice is understood to be.”⁵² He continues by observing that justice in the common prayers is most often sought through intercessions, which, in turn raises this very important question in a second way. “Bluntly:” writes Burns, “who is this “we” in the prayers ‘we have in common?’ These prayers privilege certain traditions, and the circles that have propagated common prayers are still learning, falteringly, how to attend to traditions which do not.” He proceeds then to recommend “an expansive agenda for exploration of worship” to address this imbalance and he particularly recommends beginning with non-verbal media (such as images, sound or instrumental music) so as to escape the texts in which privilege is embedded.⁵³ His observations are an important caution for any person or group seeking to design ritual, liturgy and to compose common prayer. Especially when language is employed and meaning is made more or less explicit thereby, cultural biases and the exclusionary impacts they may deliver must be carefully guarded against. It should also be noted that the sorts of changes Burns advocates have the potential to be destabilizing to those familiar with established patterns of worship. Changes of this significance must be introduced with sensitivity, over time.

⁵² Stephen Burns, *Worship and Ministry Shaped Towards God* (Preston, Vic.: Mosaic Press, 2012), 46.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 44.

A nonliturgical ritual was developed for use to guide the transition between two types of learning in the Lenten teaching series described in Chapter 4. It is described in some detail in that chapter and is presented in full as Appendix 5.

Preaching in Pastoral Contexts

There are certainly as many styles and approaches to preaching as there are individuals who regularly practice the craft. Often, the roles of pastoral caregiver and preacher are seen as distinct, highly specific to the individual, and fundamentally unrelated in skills and practices. Yet, the pulpit (whatever its architectural equivalent) presents unparalleled opportunities to inform and instruct, to exhort and inspire, to caution and to motivate. Preaching that seeks to promote the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals, and of the larger world, is pastoral care by its very nature, even if it is never understood as such by either preacher or listener. In their joint introduction to *Preaching as Pastoral Caring*, Roger Alling and David J. Schlafer organize a wide range of pastoral caring possibilities for the preacher into five general categories that establish the overall scheme for their book of collected sermons. First, they suggest, pastoral preaching may serve to comfort, assure and instill hope in the midst of challenge, sorrow, struggle or tragedy. This may be the preaching role most easily understood as pastoral in nature.

Second, such preaching may offer strategic words of encouragement for faithful work and witness. This also corresponds to the content of many familiar pastoral care encounters.

A third category addresses occasions of joy and thanksgiving. Under these circumstances pastoral preaching may give voice to communal celebration and praise. Although unspoken by Alling and Schlafer, the preacher might also give voice to communal sorrow and grief, a preaching role familiar to anyone who has ever preached for a funeral or memorial service.

Fourth, the preacher may seek to inform those present about issues of communal, social, economic and political life in theological ways. Preachers regularly bring lectionary texts into dialog with current events and concerns, and preaching the Gospel often entails the application of theological thought to both text and modern context.

Finally, the preacher may challenge the listener through effective teaching and a call to spiritual growth.⁵⁴ Such challenges are often issued by preachers with varying degrees of specificity and directiveness.

The parallels between Alling and Schlafer's categories of pastoral preaching and the liturgical and ritual considerations described earlier are very informative. The potential interactions between preaching and performative actions raise interesting possibilities, perhaps most especially where they might confound conventional expectations and thereby provoke new responses and insights. I would like to explore some examples.

A preacher might teach a familiar story from scripture in a ritual setting, which then immediately subverts the text by word or action (or both) in the way that Lathrop proposes such juxtapositions. This might have the dual effect of breaking open the story

⁵⁴ Roger Alling and David J. Schlafer, *Preaching as Pastoral Caring* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2005), ix.

in new ways while also provoking those present to consider their own responses much more consciously. Once again, care needs to be used to prevent this unorthodox use of the familiar in a new way, so as to prevent confusion or discomfort.

Another possibility might be to construct a ritual or liturgy that consciously employs van Gennep's three ritual stages. Although preaching might not be a typical event within such a ritual, the possibilities are fascinating. Perhaps the preaching would intentionally "straddle" the liminal phase, explicitly looking first back in time, then forward to new possibilities and so help the participants to move through the liminal space. Alternatively, the preaching might occur in both the first and third phases, while the liminal stage was enacted through symbolic means.

What is most provocative here is that the roles that pastoral preaching could play in newly constructed liturgy and ritual are at least as open to new possibilities as the rest of the structure in which it would be embedded. In a multi-modal approach to pastoral care related to global climate change, the possibilities for preaching in any of Alling and Schlafer's roles is relatively easy to imagine. Instructing, consoling, inspiring and challenging those present all will be needed if the subject matter is to be fruitfully addressed.

There is also a need to consider another aspect of preaching that may be very valuable to this enterprise. The role of story in preaching is often discussed as central to the discipline. Perhaps the telling of stories is most effective when the emotional weight of the situation or the text is greatest, or where finding meaning is most difficult. Caroline Fairless, an Episcopal priest and environmental activist, considers story and art to be

closely related in her sense of how sacred rituals may emerge in service of the healing of the earth. Much of her work for and concern about the healing of the earth has happened, intentionally, in what she calls “the space between church and not-church,” by which she means the space between the church and what is often termed “the world.” Her 2011 book, *The Space Between Church and Not-Church: A Sacramental Vision for the Healing of Our Planet*, is first and foremost a book of stories. These are mostly personal stories of suffering, growth and renewal which, taken together, point toward both how “church” is likely to look and function in the future and how “not-church” (the contexts and activities most often considered secular and not usually associated with familiar church enterprises) will be crucial to finding ways forward in the ecological crises of our time. She writes, “We tell our stories with words; we also tell them in paintings, sculptures, music and dance. Story and art comprise the language of the intersection from which will emerge sacred ritual on behalf of the earth community.”⁵⁵ For Fairless, storytelling is an essential element of ritual. She writes, “Storytelling in much of western culture is no longer commonplace; we are reluctant to speak the truth about ourselves and our wisdom, unwilling to dig down inside to where our truest selves reside.” And she continues, “For all kinds of reasons, [we] allow other voices – scripture, for example, to tell our stories for us.” She believes that the purposes of story telling and ritual are very similar. Both serve “to give shape to the knowing that lies within us, not yet conscious, not yet formed.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Caroline S. Fairless, *The Space between Church and Not-Church: A Sacramental Vision for the Healing of our Planet* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2011), 86.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

For Fairless, these stories *are* a liminal state. They serve to facilitate the movement from the previous state of being and understanding to the next stage. In essence, all ritual exists for this passage between states and our stories, shared, are the energy that impels us through the ritual.

This understanding of the critical function of story serves to illuminate our understanding of preaching and the role of preaching in ritual and liturgy. In Fairless's view, there cannot really be preaching without the telling of stories. Whether we rely on our stories as told in scripture; whether we construct preaching events from our own stories or those we receive from others; whether those stories are told with words, gesture, music, art or by any other means; what is essential is that the story is told. Crucially, both our own internal understandings and those of others are formed through this process.

The implications for preaching as pastoral caring in the context of this thesis, when we also consider the pastoral caring roles described by Alling and Schlafer, are essentially this: story telling is a critical part of our human ability to make meaning and therefore is a constituent element, explicit or implied, in every liturgical or ritual action. How story is expressed, using words or other means, is an open question. Who shares their stories and how they are incorporated in ritual action is also full of possibilities to be explored. If we embrace any of the structural ideas about liturgy and ritual proposed above, then the telling of stories becomes the central and most vital act.⁵⁷ For example,

⁵⁷ A sermon was prepared for the occasion of Interfaith Power and Light's annual preaching Sunday. This sermon and its intentions are described in Chapter 4 and the text of the sermon is presented in Appendix 7.

(as we will see in Chapter 4) the use of a story-telling video describing the experience of an arctic village suffering the effects of climate change not only provides a “case study” for discussion, but then informs emotionally both preaching and ritual that follow.

Introducing Praxis in Community

Developing means to orient and train a faith community to become a group that can provide pastoral care for one another is a multi-layered project that must be accomplished over time. The specific approaches discussed in this chapter -- liturgy, ritual, preaching -- can find many expressions and uses in the life of the parish.

Participation in these activities can be, itself, a joint venture that leads to a more mutual way of constructing our liturgical and ritual lives. For example, at Prince of Peace, we are now inviting small groups of lay people to contribute language to the “Rite III” liturgical prayers used in our weekday Eucharists and on other special occasions. This has been an exciting and deeply enriching experience for those who have taken up the task. With familiarity comes a greater ease, both for those composing the prayers and for those experiencing them in worship.

In the next chapter, an integrated program of teaching, preaching, worship and ritual is described in detail. Drawing upon many of the ideas presented in this chapter, the program was experienced before and during Lent in 2015. It represents the first stage of an extended program that will plant the seeds of these practices for growth within the members of the parish and our larger community.

Chapter 4

BUILDING A PRACTICING COMMUNITY

During the winter and spring of 2015, parishioners of the Memorial Church of the Prince of Peace participated in a series of programs and events designed to initiate the process of creating the caring community this thesis endorses. As described in the introduction, this combined two agendas. First, these experiences were designed to introduce the idea of “pastoral care in community” as a conscious practice for the parish to cultivate. The concept was then supported with practical training and reflection for those who chose to participate.

The second agenda for this series of programs and events was to link mutual pastoral caring to one of the most pressing and disturbing issues of our time: global warming and climate change. This linkage, itself, was twofold. First, addressing the issue directly caused the participants to realize the insidious, background anxiety and fear that we are all carrying with us that arises from our increasing awareness of the profound impacts we have had on our planet. The second connection is with the need for practices that heal our damaged planet as we also seek healing for ourselves. As is the practice in this parish, I designed and led these programs in my role as rector.

The plan for this series of events included several types of experiences. The centerpiece of the total program was a series of adult formation classes held during Lent. This series consisted of three evening sessions, each of about three hours duration that combined conceptual presentations with practical exercises and personal reflection. In

addition, a specific case study regarding a community directly affected by rising sea levels (as a direct impact of global warming) was used as a platform for exploration and learning.

The second component of the program was the inclusion of a formal service of Holy Eucharist in the first and final sessions of the teaching series. This offered the opportunity to extend the “classroom” experience into the realm of formal worship through the central sacramental experience of the Episcopal Church. For these two services, a newly composed Eucharistic prayer was employed that centered these particular Eucharistic celebrations on the love of our planet and the need for its care.

The second session of the course concluded with a ritual designed to consolidate some of the learnings and to mark a progression from our conceptual understanding of community pastoral care to the case study materials that we used for more applied practice in the techniques we were learning.

To extend the concerns about global warming and climate change beyond the adult formation series to the larger parish, we included two other events. The first was our participation in Interfaith Power and Light’s annual “Preach-In on Global Warming” program. This program encourages use of the pulpit on a designated Sunday as a platform for sensitizing congregations to the issues and calling for active involvement in meaningful responses. We registered the parish as an official participant in the program and I preached on the subjects on the designated Sunday.

Also during this period, the Episcopal Church called for a period of thirty days of reflection and activism on the subject of global warming entitled “Thirty Days of

Action.” The kickoff event of this program was a webcast forum on the crisis convened by the Presiding Bishop. The main event of the forum was a panel discussion that included religious perspectives and scientific expertise. The Presiding Bishop, herself a former oceanographer, gave the keynote address. The entire event was made available in real time as an internet video feed. At Prince of Peace, we projected a live stream of the program for parishioners to view and discuss. This webcast event was recorded, and we subsequently presented it a second time for those who could not attend during working hours. Over the following thirty days, a variety of materials and initiatives were made available, with which parishioners were invited to engage.

The Teaching Series

The Lenten adult formation series was held during three Wednesday evenings in February. In the promotional materials, the program was announced to the congregation in this way:

The great issue of our time is climate change. We hear about it daily and our growing knowledge of it is always with us, even if our concern lies slightly beneath our active awareness. Like many other issues we face, the types of personal crisis that call upon conventional pastoral care and counseling rarely emerge. Yet, our minds, bodies and souls are affected by the sheer weight of fear, guilt and despair we carry. In this Lenten season we will come together to practice “Community Care of Souls.” In this model of pastoral care we care for one another as a community of faith. Everything that we do as “church” can be directed toward mutual care for one another, restoring hope and finding ways to move forward. You are invited to join in this developing practice and envision its use in the many other areas that concern us deeply.

The announcement continued with brief descriptions of the content of each of the three sessions and logistical information. (The entire program announcement is included as Appendix 1.) As has been the practice for some years, our program invitation was extended to Christ Lutheran Church in Gettysburg, with whom we have traditionally shared Lenten programs. We were graced with the presence of several members of that church, as well as both of their clergy during the course of the program.

Two goals for the program were stated at the outset. The first was “to explore our responses to the Climate Change crisis together.” The second was “to explore new ways of being church that foster mutual caring in this time of crisis.” Specific skills to be introduced during this teaching series were drawn closely from the skills associated generally with pastoral care as described in Chapter Two. These include deep listening and empathic, non-judgmental regard; the use of a theological reflection framework or “cycle” as a conceptual tool and spiritual practice; and appreciation for one’s own cultural and social position as an element of the caring relationship.

Session One: Where We Are and Where We Stand in this Lenten Season

Each session began with a simple potluck meal of bread and soup and then included about two and one-half hours of program content. Session I was entitled *Where We Are and Where We Stand in This Lenten Season*. It opened (as did each of the sessions) with a prayer from John Philip Newell’s collection, *Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace*⁵⁸ and then with review of a basic issue statement I wrote that presented the points of departure for the series as a whole. The statement

⁵⁸ John Philip Newell, *Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 39.

emphasized the scientific consensus on the reality of the situation, the unjust nature of climate change impacts worldwide, and the need to address the issue with faith and hope. This statement is included in the first handout, which is provided in Appendix 2.

We began this first session with an exercise in focused listening. Each participant was invited to choose three words that named their emotions at the present time. These could be in response to the Issue Statement they had just heard, or emotions with which they arrived at the session, or emotions stirred up by being present for the stated purpose of the program. They were instructed to write them on a sheet of paper and turn it face down.

Each participant then chose a partner. Each was to tell their partner the three words they chose, explaining each briefly and taking no more and no less than three minutes in total, without conversation. At the end of three minutes, the partners traded roles. Neither partner could take notes. Following the exchange, each was asked to write down the answers to four questions. First, “What was the most important thing your partner said to you, from their standpoint? And how do you know?”

The second question was, “What was the most important thing that your partner said to you, from your own point of view? Third, “At what point was God spoken of in the conversation, if at all?” And finally, “What were your partner’s three words?”

A general discussion followed. The emotions expressed by the participants to their partners covered a broad range, from contentment and curiosity to fear and dread. Participants also reported a widely varying ability to actually recall the specific words

their partner cited. In all, the exercise developed an appreciation for cultivating the ability to listen very carefully, in the moment, to the exact expression of the other person. I then further elaborated on the essential nature of the skill of deeply focused listening. As a first attempt at doing this, it was only a beginning effort, of course. But in several subsequent parish activities, we have employed similar exercises, which serve to develop further this specific skill in our community.

A second exercise was then initiated with the question, “What Do We Do When We ‘Do’ Church?” Participants were asked to list activities that constituted “church” to them. These were gathered together in a group conversation and recorded for future reference. As might be expected from a self-selected group of this type, the understanding of what “doing church” meant was rich and detailed. The group was then asked, “Which of these do you consider to be ‘pastoral caring’ for one another, and which are not?” Finally, the group was asked, “How might each of these last be turned to an opportunity to care for one another?” Once again, the conversation was both thoughtful and nuanced. By the conclusion of the conversation, the range of activities that might be turned toward mutual care encompassed several aspects of “doing church.”

Following these exercises, the group was invited, as “homework,” to develop a personal response to the work of the evening in this way: “You are strongly encouraged to form a response to this first session in any way that helps you to process and clarify your thoughts and emotions. A wide range of possible responses exists, so choose what seems most compelling to you at this time.” Illustrative possibilities were offered, including composing a prayer, a hymn, or writing a song; writing a poem, an essay, or a

series of journal entries; writing a letter to someone they know, or someone they do not know; drawing, painting or photographing an image(s); assembling a collage of relevant images; finding a psalm that clarifies their response; and making or finding an object of any sort that resonates with their feelings. The participants were invited to bring their responses to the next session.

Before departure, the twenty-six participants in this first session were asked to share their reactions and observations. While all were very positive, some participants expressed curiosity about how the exercises might come together to constitute a body of practice. This, they were told, would become more evident in the next sessions.

The first session then concluded with a celebration of Holy Eucharist. The Eucharistic prayer was developed using the form found in the *Book of Common Prayer* for developing Eucharistic prayers for special occasions (known widely in the Episcopal Church as “Rite III.”)⁵⁹ Scriptures were chosen for the purpose of emphasizing responsibility for stewardship of the earth and responses to crises. The Eucharistic Prayer and the scripture selections are included as Appendix 3.

Session Two: Justice Matters

One week later, the second session of the series was held. It was titled, *Justice Matters: Who Are Our Neighbors in Creation and How Do We Serve God’s Justice?* Following an opening prayer, the group was invited to reflect upon the first session and to present the responses created during the intervening week. Many participants shared their work and their thoughts. Included were two pieces of visual art created in response,

⁵⁹ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the use of “Rite III” Eucharistic prayers.

several poems and prayers composed, a psalm selected and other poetry selected and read to the group. Other comments and reflections on the work of the first session were also offered.

We then proceeded with the introduction of this second session. The first half of the session was organized around a specific case study involving economic, social and cultural justice issues. The small town of Kivalina, Alaska, home to about 400 Native Americans, has already been severely impacted by rising sea levels and warming sea temperatures. We read together a recent, very extensive Washington Post feature article describing the current situation there. The entire article is provided as Appendix 4.

Kivalina is an isolated village of about four hundred people, located on a barrier island eighty-three miles north of the Arctic Circle. Climate change is having a profound effect on the villagers, eliminating their traditional means of livelihood and, with it, their Native Alaskan culture. During the winter, the village had been protected by an ice sheet that not only prevented flooding, but provided the villagers with their traditional means of hunting whales. With the rise in ocean temperatures, the ice no longer forms as it once did. The villagers can no longer hunt the whales safely and their village is vulnerable to the destruction of winter storms. In short, the people of Kivalina are living with severe impacts of climate change on a daily basis.

In addition, they have been engaged in protracted negotiations with the federal and state agencies because the village clearly must be relocated. Seeking relocation funding, and a voice in the relocation process, the villagers have long been engaged in

litigation. Efforts to document their native culture before the village is lost are also underway.

As a vehicle for teaching about climate change, the Kivalina story has some particularly helpful attributes. Because most of the clearest impacts of climate change occur near oceans in remote places (and especially in the Arctic and Antarctic regions) the story has the virtue of taking place within the United States. The people of Kivalina have traditionally lived in a subsistence economy, and so the impact of the loss of their way of life bears similarities to the unjust impacts of climate change worldwide. Once we actually saw and heard the people (via a BBC video described below) their familiarity as American citizens was placed in sharp contrast with their ethnicity and very different way of life.

For the purposes of this teaching series, Kivalina has two points of additional relevance. First, the Episcopal Church has a parish in the tiny village. The national church has been involved in supporting their legal actions and deeply engaged in efforts to preserve the culture of the Native Americans of the village and assist in relocation efforts. Second, our national church and our diocese are actively engaged in anti-racism training for both clergy and lay persons. The indigenous people of Kivalina provide an excellent opportunity to discuss both institutional racism and our own biases and blind spots with regard to the role that race plays in situations like that of Kivalina.

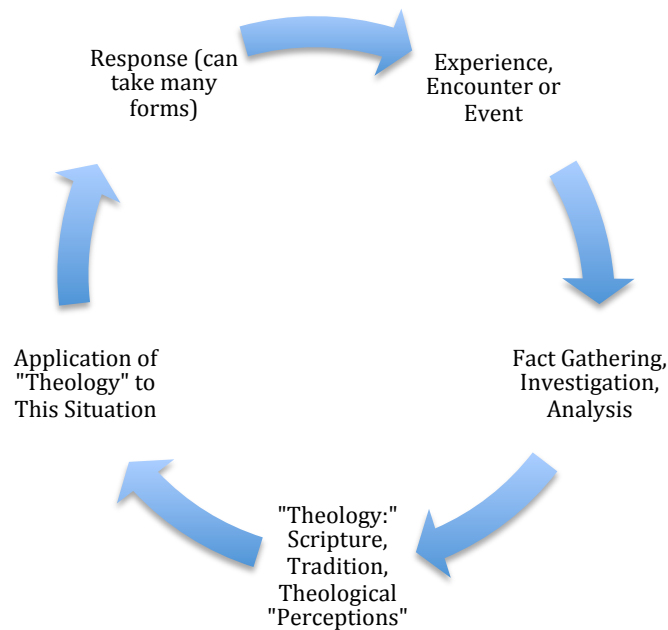
Following our review of this article, the situation in Kivalina and our church's involvement was discussed by the group. Those present were then asked to consider a key question: "What would justice look like to the people of Kivalina?" This discussion

was very revealing of the cultural location and biases held by those of us in the room. A number of participants went directly to a statement of what should be done *for* the people of the village and how the principal actors and agencies of the federal and state governments and the church should intervene on their behalf. After allowing the discussion to continue for a period, I then gently pointed out that the discussion had been indicative of our concern for the people of Kivalina and their values, but that the question had been asked to elicit their best anticipation of what justice would look like “to the people of Kivalina” rather than who should rush to their aid. After a period of contemplation, the answers to the question were significantly different. The difficulty of truly understanding the point of view of Kivalina’s citizens was acknowledged and tentative ideas emerged. The first was, “Ask them.” Other possibilities included the desire to retain their indigenous way of life and traditional livelihood; the desire that justice should be ensured by the government that had placed them on their island to begin with; and the desire that their culture and values should somehow be preserved if their way of live could not continue. Additionally, justice was thought to include acknowledgement of responsibility for the situation they are in, and that solutions would be sought collaboratively. It was a very different discussion in tone and content from the first. The participants were then told that we would return to the story of Kivalina in the third session of the program, with an opportunity to hear from the people of Kivalina themselves.

The second portion of the session was devoted to a more explicitly didactic discussion of pastoral care theory and how it might be applied within our own parish. The

presentation and discussion were based on modification and simplification of two pastoral care “paradigms” discussed in the Chapter Two. The first was a modification of Larthey’s Pastoral Cycle of Care framework.⁶⁰

Figure 2: Modified Pastoral Cycle of Care



It was presented in diagram form as shown in Figure 2, redesigned for easier description to a group with less specialized vocabulary than might be used in a typical Clinical Pastoral Education context. We took a few minutes to “fit” some of the aspects of the Kivalina story into the various stages of the cycle so that those stages were well understood.

The second concept to be presented was a reduced and modified application of Stephen Pattison’s proposals for theological “perceptions” as they may be applied to

⁶⁰ See Chapter 2 for an extensive description of Emanuel Larthey’s “Pastoral Cycle of Care” and its uses.

pastoral care in community. He makes these proposals as a means of providing theological tools for personal and group exploration and growth.⁶¹ The handout for the session provided some background (again, see Appendix 2) but for this evening, the participants were asked to consider some “basic theological ideas” that might be helpful in our context. Of Pattison’s fifteen “perceptions” we focused on seven. The first four to be discussed were: “Creation is a whole, and a very large whole;” “The creation does not belong to any one person or group of people;” “Humans are not in control of creation;” and “The spirit of life is everywhere.” The stated purpose of the discussion was to place the entire idea of pastoral care into a much larger context than the familiar interaction of a caregiver and care receiver. Because Pattison’s explicitly stated theology of creation lies at the center of his “perceptions,” the discussion successfully linked the issues of environmental stewardship, climate change and the Kivalina story with this broader understanding of pastoral care. Given the range of experience and knowledge among the group, these theological proposals seemed self-evident to some while being fresh and unanticipated to others.

Following this initial discussion, three more of Pattison’s theological propositions were introduced to support the idea that the work of caring for one another can be mutual, communal and relational. Those proposals were: “People are called to be children of God and brothers and sisters of one another;” “We are all in it together; and “We are on a journey to the future which is necessarily mostly unknown.” The conversation surrounding these theological proposals was deep and engaged. However, one or two of

⁶¹ See Chapter 2 for discussion of Pattison’s “Theological Perceptions” and their possible uses in this context.

the participants clearly were anxious to be discussing “what we can do” about the situation in Kivalina, and the impulse to active engagement was strong in the group as a whole. After assuring those participants that we would return to the subject of Kivalina and activism in the third session, the general desire to “do something helpful” was used as a departure point for a brief but helpful conversation about the need for individuals and groups to be relieved from overwhelming and paralyzing dread and fear in order to accomplish activist goals. This point seemed to be well understood and appreciated in the group.

As an exercise in applying these concepts, the participants divided themselves into five small groups. The transcribed chart notes from the previous session’s discussion of “what we do as church” were distributed, and the groups were asked to pick three of Pattison’s theological proposals that they found interesting, and then to identify three aspects of “doing church” from the list that might directly respond to the chosen theological proposals. The result was an interesting mix of responses. For example, one group chose as their three theological proposals, “Humans are not in control of creation;” “We are all in it together;” and “We are on a journey to the future which is necessarily mostly unknown.” They choose from among the ways we do church three responding activities: “Pray together;” “Study and learn;” and “Care of souls.”

Another group chose “The creation does not belong to any one person or group of people;” “People are called to be children of God and brothers and sisters to one another;” and “We are on a journey to the future which is necessarily mostly unknown.” Their responses as “church” were to “Pray together and worship;” “Study and learn;” and

“Listen.” And so the exercise continued. None of the groups chose precisely the same theological proposals or responses. The ensuing conversation demonstrated that the connections between theological ideas and ways of doing church were being well explored and appreciated.

Once again, the participants were invited to form a personal response to the content of the session and to bring it for presentation to the group in the next session if they wished.

Concluding Ritual

The second session then concluded with a ritual designed to help bridge the transition between the intellectual content of much of the session to the more emotionally-centered world of personal responses to climate change and the uncertainty of the future. The full design of this ritual is provided in Appendix 5. It was based on a repeating set of cumulative physical responses to a poem, read aloud in sections by members of the group. The poem used for the occasion was “Dear Mortals” by the English poet Nick Drake. The full text of the poem is also included in Appendix 5. It begins:

The future says:

Dear mortals;
I know you are busy with your colourful lives;
I have no wish to waste the little time that remains
On arguments and heated debates;
But before I can appear
Please, close your eyes, sit still
And listen carefully
To what I am about to say;
I haven’t happened yet, but I will.
I can’t pretend it’s going to be
Business as usual.

The poem concludes:

You lie to yourselves
Because you’re afraid of the dark.
But the truth is: you are in my hands

And I am in yours.
We are in this together,
Face to face and eye to eye;
We're made for each other.
Now those of you who are still here;
Open your eyes and tell me what you see.⁶²

“Dear Mortals” was divided into three sections of approximately equal length and a participant was recruited to read each section. Every participant was given three large, polished river stones prior to the beginning of the ritual. The room was prepared with lowered lights and a small covered table to hold the physical elements of the ritual. The participants were invited to arrange their chairs in two semicircles in front of the table. Everyone was assured that participation was optional and at their discretion and personal comfort level.

The ritual was introduced with a simple statement: “This is a ritual of remembrance and forgiveness. The poem is by Nick Drake. It is entitled “Dear Mortals;” from his collection, *The Farewell Glacier*. Prior to the reading of each section of the poem, a candle was lit and a Tibetan singing bowl was sounded. After the first section (the first 15 lines) of the poem was read, the following direction was given: “Remember a time when you realized that a significant change was about to arrive in your life. This change may or may not have been related to stewardship of the environment. Acknowledge the feelings that may accompany that realization that change was coming, such as fear and anticipation or others.” Following a pause, the following was said: Remember a time when you realized that a significant change was about to arrive in your

⁶² Nick Drake, *The Farewell Glacier* (Hexham, UK: Bloodaxe Books, 2012), 49-50. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

life. When you are ready to signal your remembrance, please place a stone in the first bowl.” The singing bowl that had just been sounded was then passed by the participants to receive the stones and then returned to the table.

In the same fashion, the second and third sections of the poem were read, each preceded by the lighting of a candle and the sounding of a bowl. After the second section (lines 16-31) of the poem was read, the participants were invited to: “Remember a time when you failed to act in some important way. This failure to act may or may not be related to stewardship of the environment. Acknowledge the feelings that may accompany that failure, such as guilt and remorse and others.” Again after a pause: “Remember a time when you failed to act in some important way. When you are ready to signal your remembrance, please place a stone in the second bowl.” The second bowl was passed to receive the participants’ actions and returned to the table.

Following the reading of the third section (the final 18 lines) of the poem the participants were asked to: “Remember a time when you experienced true forgiveness. This forgiveness may or may not be related to stewardship of the environment. Acknowledge the feelings that may accompany forgiveness, such as joy and freedom and others.” Following the pause: “Remember a time when you experienced true forgiveness. When you are ready to signal your remembrance, please place a stone in the third bowl.” The third bowl was passed and then returned with its contents to the table.

The ritual was concluded in silence by emptying the contents of the first bowl into the second and then the combined contents of that bowl into the third. The stones in the third bowl were reverently “mixed” by hand, after which the third bowl and the three

candles were moved to the center of the table. A parting Benediction was then spoken: “Remember and Forgive. Forgive Yourself, Forgive Others and Know God’s Forgiveness. For As We Forgive, So We Will Be Forgiven. Go in Peace.”

Many of the participants later remarked that the ritual was very moving and significantly changed the tone of the sessions up to that point. I believe that the ritual affectively underscored the liminal state in which we found ourselves at that moment. This second session introduced a climate change story in ways that altered our ability to identify with the problem, and so to consider it afresh. Yet we could not move immediately into forming our responses, either emotionally or in terms of practical actions. The ritual design itself intentionally produces a movement through a liminal stage (the second section) toward new understandings and transformed and the poem is similarly constructed. This was my intent in locating the ritual at this point in the teaching series.

In all, while containing much information, this second session accomplished its primary goals of establishing ways to think about pastoral care and eliciting both intellectual and emotional responses to the Kivalina story. The session’s use of a case study, some direct experience of the impact of personal cultural location on the ability to empathize with others (and so to provide them with care), didactic materials in both pastoral care theory and theology and the ritual conclusion with its use of poetry and symbols provided a multi-modal learning experience. The session clearly held the potential to be overwhelming in its richness and variety. But to the great credit of the

assembled group, each new piece of the evening's program was greeted with interest, engagement and openness. It was a remarkable evening.

Session Three: Restoring Hope and Taking Action

Session III was entitled *Restoring Hope and Taking Action – Being Church in This Time of Crisis*. As promised, we returned to the subject of Kivalina, Alaska in the third session. Following the opening prayer, we watched a video in which the people of Kivalina spoke directly about their lives, their village and the future.⁶³ The video was streamed from Youtube. It was produced by the BBC in 2013 and has the virtue of presenting the people of the village (including their Episcopal priest), with their unique accents and unprecedented concerns, against the background of the village itself. We reminded ourselves of our experience the week before in which we had to make a conscious shift out of our own cultural context, privilege and biases in order to even attempt to see the situation through the eyes of those in Kivalina. Then we considered this question: “How would the people of Kivalina describe their hope?”

From the conversation that followed, two things were made clear. First (as anticipated) the opportunity to see and hear the people of Kivalina was very moving and meaningful to the participants. Second, the hopes of the people of Kivalina were difficult to anticipate from our geographic and cultural distance. This was due, at least in part, to the new clarity the video provided about the setting and the culture of Kivalina. Because the people of Kivalina are both recognizably American and at the same time very “other,”

⁶³ BBC News, “America’s First Climate Change Refugees: Hundreds Forced to Flee Their Alaskan Village of Kivalina before It Disappears Underwater within a Decade.” Accessed March 4, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4oINN_KUIA

we were presented with interesting challenges as a group to identify with and anticipate how “hope” might be manifested in Kivalina.

The group imagined many possibilities for how hope “might look” to the people of the village. These included: to have a voice in their future; the sure and certain recognition of God’s love; some assurance that someone cares for them and will walk with them; that their children would be secure; that their desires would be as respected as the costs and practicalities of the solutions; that they would be able to adjust to whatever the future holds; and perhaps, simply, that anything at all would actually happen.

Doing Church as Pastoral Care

Following that discussion, the participants were asked once again to divide themselves into small discussion groups. Their task was to discuss and be prepared to describe how they might take an aspect of “doing church” and intentionally direct it toward providing pastoral care to one another. Their goals would be to reduce anxiety, instill hope and build community. They were advised to focus on possibilities from the list we developed in the first session, when we imagined what aspects of “doing church” could be directed to the purposes of mutual pastoral care. The list included: prayer (together), liturgy or ritual, teaching and learning, preaching, and opportunities for deep, mutual listening. They were told that it was not necessary (or even possible) to develop a detailed plan. But in general terms they were to describe how they would approach our goals by “doing church” in this way. So, for example, when asked how the aspect of doing church they called “Prayer together” might be directed toward pastoral care of one another in community, they responded with possibilities such as creating a prayer chain,

public prayer and worship, celebratory prayers, home visits and a network of “social care.” Teaching and learning directed toward community pastoral care yielded these responses: teach collaboration skills, teach stories of survival in history, learn about famous leaders, and develop a “collaborative theology of hope.” As we made our way down the list of the five primary ways of doing church that were previously selected by the group as possibly useful for providing mutual pastoral care, the conversation began to take on a much more “pastoral” tone. Valuable insights such as remaining nonjudgmental, providing a safe place in which to be vulnerable, and gathering to listen and contemplate without immediately moving into planning an “action” all surfaced. As this conversation continued, it became very apparent that the main didactic points of the program had been learned and could be applied by those who attended.

Final Exercise: Describe Your Vision

To conclude the series, the participants were asked to “take a few minutes and assess where your willingness to engage with the climate change crisis seems now to begin and to end. Do you feel that you are more, or less, motivated to make a positive contribution to the problem than you were before we spent this time together?”

The ensuing conversation revealed a variety of responses to the program as a whole. One change in the collective understanding was a greater appreciation for the complexity of the entire issue of climate change, especially when attempting to understand its impacts on people living in very different circumstances from us. Most participants expressed interest in engaging with the issue further, especially as a church community. There was a recognition that a church’s response did not necessarily always

have to involve “hands-on” service, but that spiritual awakening and political engagement were mutually supportive. The idea that we need to care for one another in the face of the emotional and spiritual impacts of the climate change crisis had clearly taken hold.

Finally, a brief evaluation instrument was distributed that was to be filled out between the end of this last exercise and the worship that was planned to close the series. Every participant present completed the instrument, which is provided as Appendix 6. Although the numbers involved are too small to be analyzed quantitatively, some trends were noted and several responses seem to be held in common. When asked to describe their current emotional state and their state at the beginning of the series, there was a clear movement toward hope, optimism and reduced fear and anxiety. Most participants wished to stay engaged in the question. Continuing the conversation, listening carefully and paying more attention to the issues were all mentioned multiple times. Puzzlement about what individuals can do to make a difference was also voiced, as it had been at the outset. Several responses indicated a desire to learn more about “climate refugees.” In all, the evaluations were very positive and desire to remain engaged in both the issue of climate change and the practice of pastoral care was high.

This last evening ended with a Celebration of Holy Eucharist using the same Eucharistic Prayer and scriptures that we used to conclude the first session.

Extending the Learning to the Entire Parish

As stated above, we included two other events in our parish program. The first was our formal participation in Interfaith Power and Light’s annual “Preach-In on Global

Warming” program. On that day (February 15, 2015), I preached a sermon that drew upon the Revised Common Lectionary readings for the day. The lesson from Mark’s gospel was the story of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-19). This was used as an opportunity to preach on the need to pay close attention to epiphanies, which speak of hidden truths revealed and of manifestations of that which is heretofore unseen. Relating this to the revelation of the distress that we have unleashed on our beautiful blue planet, the sermon also acknowledged the overwhelming nature of what has been revealed and our need to rely on one another for solace, for strength and, ultimately, for the creation of a healthy community. The tie to the story of the Transfiguration was made explicit since the sermon was preached on the last Sunday after Epiphany. I said,

“We might ask ourselves, on this day of momentous scriptural epiphanies, what is being revealed to us now about the condition of our world, what is being revealed to us now about our role as stewards of the earth, and, most of all, what is being revealed to us now about the love of God for all of creation?”

After reviewing briefly what has become the indisputable scientific consensus, the sermon moved to answer those questions:

“What we are learning is what the three disciples learned, even through their terror at the sight of the Transfiguration of Christ. We are learning that the power of Almighty God, who brought this earth and all that is and ever will be into being – God’s power is the power to transform. The power to alter time and space. The power to create anew, to begin afresh. The power to heal all injuries and comfort all of the afflicted.

Revealed to us on this day of epiphanies is the ongoing reality of God’s great desires for our world and for everything that dwells herein, God’s desire that we flourish in the love and light of the divine. That through God’s Son, born for us, transfigured for us, God’s great act of love that is creation itself can heal, can thrive, can itself be transformed. Can be Transfigured. But we must be part of this healing. And so we ourselves must be healed.

We are learning, as did Peter and James and John, that no one human person can act alone, no one community or nation can prevail in the face of this crisis. Our hope is in the community of the faithful, in the work we can do together, in the common cause we must find. We must accept, at long last, the great commandment to be the Body of Christ, active in God's world. For this is what we have been created to be. This is why God made us.

The sermon then turned to a call to participate in the Lenten series of learning and reflection described earlier in this chapter:

Through our Lenten work of study, contemplation, reflection and worship together, we will learn how to help one another to look past the terror of what we now know to be true – that our lovely blue planet, our tiny island home is gravely endangered. We will learn how to help one another resist diverting our gaze from this difficult truth. We will learn to use the assurance of the love of Christ to restore our hope and confidence. We will find that, through love and care for one another, we can break the bonds of spiritual paralysis and move toward the health that is found in doing, found in making a difference, found in following the vocation that is ours in Christ.⁶⁴

This sermon accomplished its primary goals of tying a vital scriptural passage to the issue of global warming and climate change in an unusual way that marked the Global Preach-in occasion. Its call to participate in the Lenten series to engage the problem was well met, with about twenty-five percent of those who heard the sermon appearing for the first session of the Lenten program.

Also during this period, the Episcopal Church called for a period of thirty days of reflection and activism surrounding the global warming/climate change crisis entitled “Thirty Days of Action.” The first event of this program was a webcast forum on the crisis convened by the Presiding Bishop. It included a panel discussion that presented various religious perspectives and scientific expertise. The Presiding Bishop's

⁶⁴ The full text of this sermon is provided as Appendix 7.

introductory remarks set the tone of sobriety and hope. The forum was made available in real time as an internet video feed. At Prince of Peace, we projected a live stream of the program for parishioners to view and discuss. Attendance was very limited because the event itself happened during business hours of a weekday. Over the following 30 days, a variety of materials and initiatives were made available, with which parishioners were invited to engage.⁶⁵

Reflections and Next Efforts

In the months since the programs described in the previous chapter were completed, there have been opportunities to discuss their impacts with some of the church members who participated. This has allowed for some assessment of the effectiveness of those programs. At the same time, new ways to extend these initial learning experiences have been recognized for some groups within the parish. Meanwhile, the news about climate change and many other issues that cause deep concern for all of us has certainly not become any more hopeful. This suggests that the needs for pastoral care in community that gave rise to this thesis are becoming ever more acute.

Our developing understanding of the impacts of the teaching, liturgical and ritual practices and preaching that constituted our programmatic approach, and those that have occurred since that time is imprecise. Those impacts are, at this point, subtle but recognizable. Like so many endeavors in parish life, progress is difficult to measure and change often comes slowly. Nonetheless, there are signs that the programs and related activities are having a positive effect on our community of faith.

⁶⁵ <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/30-days-action>

The intense focus on climate change during our parish Lenten programs and in their immediate aftermath has, of necessity, yielded somewhat to the need to address other issues as well. This has been especially true during the particularly contentious primary election season preceding the U.S. presidential elections that will be held in the fall of 2016. A series of international political and religious challenges has resulted in an unprecedented crisis of refugees fleeing nations in the Middle East. These, together with a terrible season of terrorist attacks throughout the world, including on American soil, have resulted in a reactive political backlash of anti-Muslim and anti-immigration rhetoric. Members of the parish, representing a wide range of political orientation, have found themselves discomforted by the discourse and conflicted in their personal responses to the challenges of these events.

The pertinent question remains: after nearly a year, what can be said about our efforts to introduce a new model of pastoral care at the local level? In response, several observations can be made. First, for those roughly thirty individuals that participated in the Lenten Teaching Series, the conversation is ongoing. As a community that is working to form one another in this way, some key concepts are becoming touchstones. Perhaps ultimately most important is the growing awareness of spiritual reflection as a central activity of parish life. Some parishioners recognize that our practice of opening vestry and committee meetings with reflective scripture study and prayer offers opportunities for care for one another. In this way, we are employing modifications of Lartey's Cycle of Pastoral Care to good effect in non-specialist ways. In general, the ability of parish

leaders to reflect on concerns from the local community and the larger world through the use of scripture, personal experience, and theological concepts is developing well.

Second, there is a growing appreciation of the role of preaching as a means of pastoral care throughout the parish. I now hear regular comments about the usefulness of my preaching as a means of reducing anxieties, renewing hope and pointing toward ways of living in the world to promote the common good and the Kingdom of God. I believe this is happening both because of an increased awareness and sensitivity on the part of the parishioners who participated in the Lenten Teaching Series, and due to my own greater intentionality to preach toward these goals. It also seems that conversations among parishioners about the sermons contribute to their impact in this pastoral dimension.

Third, although our opportunities to employ specially designed liturgies and rituals have been limited (and will likely remain so) we have included new groups and concerns in our Sunday Prayers of the People. We also have employed specially-composed Eucharistic Prayers in our noontime service on Thursdays and on other occasions. Inviting lay people to be involved in the development of these prayers continues to extend these new pastoral care concepts into the liturgical praxis of our parish.

Two new efforts hold promise for further development of this paradigm of pastoral care within the parish. The first results from our recognition that the Education for Ministry (EfM) program offers an excellent opportunity both to employ these skills in a small group setting and to provide additional training. Education for Ministry is a well-

known program developed and administered worldwide by the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. EfM is oriented to training dedicated lay people for ministries within and outside of the church. The program spans four academic years of prayer, study and reflection in a small group of up to twelve members that meets weekly. In addition to providing effective grounding in scripture, church history and theology, the program has, since its inception, taught a variety of models and methods for group and individual spiritual reflection. I have been a certified EfM mentor for more than a decade and currently co-mentor the EfM group at Prince of Peace. During the years of my involvement with the program I have observed a steady evolution of its methods, study materials and administrative structures.

There are two ways in which EfM and the community pastoral care model described in this thesis intersect. Both are potentially important for the life of the parish. First, the basic curriculum offers opportunities for teaching and practicing some of the core skills of pastoral caring within a small group that is formed for the purpose of learning and spiritual praxis. As one example, the overall theme for the current (2015-16) year is “Living as Spiritually Mature Christians.” The supporting materials include initial exercises in listening to one another’s spiritual autobiographies in intentional, non-directive ways.⁶⁶ While the course materials provide some basic background in empathic listening, we have been able to use this framework to begin to develop more sophisticated skills in focused listening, improved recall and non-anxious reception of deeply personal

⁶⁶ Richard E. Brewer, *Education for Ministry Reading and Reflection Guide, Volume C: Living as Spiritually Mature Christians* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2015), 10-19.

material. Throughout the year, these skills have been expanding and deepening within the group.

The second way in which EfM offers an opportunity for more extensive training and practice is in the realm of structured spiritual reflection. A core skill that has been taught since EfM was originally conceived, the program originally employed its own highly structured reflection models and techniques. More recently, however, the EfM program has welcomed a more broadly defined approach to spiritual reflection which may include approaches developed and employed at the local level. This has provided us with the opportunity to explore more deeply the modified Cycle of Pastoral Care that was taught in the adult formation series described in Chapter Four.

All of this work, in turn, has effects on parish life that extend beyond the EfM seminar group itself. In my experience, EfM study and training has a wide and readily recognizable impact on the life of the local parishes that host the program. This includes the contributions of increased biblical literacy, an enhanced historical perspective on the church, and a useful theological vocabulary for daily life and ministry. These impacts transform the “parish conversation” in very positive ways. This may be due, in no small part, to the likelihood that EfM participants are already highly motivated and engaged local leaders. Our ability to continue to introduce this new model of community pastoral care through the EfM program effectively leverages its impact on the whole parish.

Similarly, we are about to embark on an expansion of training for our Pastoral Care and Eucharistic Visitor teams. In most ways, the activities of these groups resemble the more familiar one-on-one caregiving paradigm in which Episcopal priests are usually

trained. However, at Prince of Peace this is already beginning to expand. For example, while most of this care is still provided by a single visiting caregiver, the weekly sermons are now being carried by visitors to those whom they visit. This is a change that was initiated by the visitors themselves. Our Eucharistic Visitors, in particular, report that these sermons (in keeping with the greater caregiving intentionality with which they are crafted) are supporting deeper conversations and more extensive interactions with those they are visiting than was the case in the past.

In conclusion, there is enough evidence of positive results over these few months to support further development of this approach to pastoral care in community within the parish. Our intent is to continue to teach and employ the various aspects of this multi-modal approach to pastoral caregiving so that, over time, the parish membership becomes more capable of caring for one another. The result we anticipate is that we will find ourselves less overwhelmed by the many large challenges our world faces. Then, by the Grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be energized and inspired to work toward their solutions.

Appendix 1
Parish Program Announcement

Practicing Community Care of Souls in a Time of Ecological Crisis A Program of Study and Reflection for Lent, 2015

The great issue of our time is climate change. We hear about it daily and our growing knowledge of it is always with us, even if our concern lies slightly beneath our active awareness. Like many other issues we face, the types of personal crisis that call upon conventional pastoral care and counseling rarely emerge. Yet, our minds, bodies and souls are affected by the sheer weight of fear, guilt and despair we carry. Or, perhaps, we choose to avert our gaze, refusing to look at climate change too closely for fear of what we will discover. However we respond, we often experience frustration, anger, loss of hope and an inability to act. We may believe that we can contribute very little to meaningful solutions or that the crisis is too far developed for any workable intervention to be successful.

In this Lenten season we will come together to practice “Community Care of Souls.” In this model of pastoral care we care for one another as a community of faith. Everything that we do as “church” can be directed toward mutual care for one another, restoring hope and finding ways to move forward. You are invited to join in this developing practice and envision its use in the many other areas that concern us deeply.

We will learn, reflect, respond and pray, both in groups and individually. We will design and conduct rituals and worship, using Eucharistic Prayers and other forms that we develop together. Most importantly, we will seek ways to move through our guilt, grief and hopelessness, renewing our commitments to doing justice and making peace. This way of caring for one another is good, hard and hopeful work. There is no better time to begin than during Lent. Please join us as we explore the possibilities.

Wednesday, Feb. 25, 6:30 pm - ***Session I: Where We Are and Where We Stand: Fear, Grief, Guilt and Redemption in This Lenten Season***

Wednesday, March 4, 6:30 pm - ***Session II: Justice Matters: Who Are Our Neighbors in Creation and How Do We Serve God’s Justice?***

Wednesday, March 11, 6:30 pm - ***Session III: Restoring Hope and Taking Action: Being Church in This Time of Crisis***

Each of these sessions will take place at Prince of Peace Episcopal Church. Your guide will be the Rev. Herbert Sprouse, Rector of Prince of Peace, as we move through terrain that is both familiar and newly imagined. We will begin each Wednesday evening at 6:30 with a simple meal of soup and bread, to be followed by the work of the session and concluding in some form of worship by about 8:30. We ask that, if at all possible, you commit to attending all three sessions. Further, we ask that you understand that this will

not be a forum for debating the science of climate change. We will accept the mainstream science as given for these sessions.

Appendix 2

Course Handout Materials

Practicing Community Care of Souls in a Time of Ecological Crisis

Lenten Adult Formation Series I

Prince of Peace Episcopal Church

February 25, 2015

Session I: Where We Are and Where We Stand in This Lenten Season

Opening Prayer

Why We Have Gathered at This Time: A Basic Issue Statement

Certainly we are all aware of the interrelated issues of global warming and climate change. About the basic facts, there can no longer be meaningful disagreement. Our earth is changing in ways that could eventually make life for most humans and nonhumans unsustainable. What we know is this: average temperatures, worldwide, have been steadily rising and it doesn't take a whole lot of temperature change to destabilize the climate of the entire planet. We are losing arctic ice as the oceans warm and coastal water levels are rising measurably. It is also indisputable now that many human activities, most importantly deforestation and burning fossil fuels, have contributed to these changes very significantly. And yet those very activities are increasing, as population grows worldwide and as the most populous nations in Asia burn more coal and petroleum to support their own economic development.

We know that the earth is a highly buffered system, which means that there has been a great natural resistance to this change of global temperature in the past. But this also means that changes in our way of life and our use of the earth, even drastic changes, will take a long time to be felt. We are either very near, or may have already passed a tipping point, beyond which we will be living with the severe consequences of our actions for many, many generations to come. Perhaps, in fact, those changes will accelerate and become irreversible within any meaningful measures of human time.

We also know that the impacts of climate change are extremely unjust, and will become more so with time. The poorest people of our world live near the oceans, seas and rivers. They have contributed little to create these problems and yet they are already losing their homes, their livelihoods and their cultures as the ocean levels rise. We are losing animal and plant species to extinction at an alarming and accelerating rate, and we can't begin to know how those losses impact ecosystems large or small. Politically, the entire planet appears to lack the will to address these problems in any meaningful way and, certainly, the largest, richest developed nations cannot seem to find a way to work together for real change.

With overwhelming agreement among credible scientists about these facts, we must set aside our tendencies to look for the loopholes, to seek for a way to dismiss the science. We must do this in good – Faith. We must resist a confused and confounded

commercial media that mistakenly believes that balanced reporting on this issue requires the posture that all opinions on the subject are equally valid and must be given equal weight. They are not. We now know too much. Too much has been revealed to us for us to look away. And yet if we gaze directly upon these truths now revealed to us, we may well be terrified. Or, we may lose hope. Or we may find ourselves paralyzed, unable to take any action. These are the conditions that lead us to find new ways to care for one another, to redirect our attention to God's love for all of Creation and to move together to act on behalf of our beautiful blue planet and all of our neighbors.

Our Tasks For This Lenten Time Together:

- Explore our responses to the Climate Change crisis together
- Explore new ways of being church that foster mutual caring in this time of crisis

Exercise One: Listening as Caring: A Foundational Skill

Each person takes two sheets of paper (one for the exercise and one for notes)

Choose three words that name your emotions at this time, right here and now. These can be in response to the Issue Statement you have just heard, they may be emotions that you brought with you into the room, they may be emotions stirred up by being present in this place for this purpose. Write them on your paper and turn it face down.

Choose a partner. Tell them your three words, explain each briefly, take no more and *no less than* three minutes in total. Neither should take notes. Make sure your paper remains face down. Trade places with your partner doing the speaking and hear them do the same.

Now, on the back of your paper, still face down, please answer these questions:

- a) What was the most important thing your partner said to you, from their standpoint? And how do you know?
- b) What was the most important thing that your partner said to you, from your own point of view?
- c) At what point was God spoken of in the conversation, if at all?
- d) What were your partner's three words?

Exercise Two: What Do We Do When We Do Church?

- a) List activities that are "church" to you on the "notes" paper.
- b) We will gather these up in a list on the easel.
- c) Which of these do you consider to be "pastoral" caring for one another, which are not?
- d) How might each of these last be turned to an opportunity to care for one another?

Exercise Three: Forming A Response (homework!)

You are strongly encouraged to form a response to this first session in any way that helps you to process and clarify your thoughts and emotions. A wide range of possible

responses exists, so choose what seems most compelling to you *at this time*. Possibilities include

- Compose a prayer, a hymn, write a song
- Write a poem, an essay, a series of journal entries
- Write a letter to someone you know, or someone you do not know
- Draw, paint or photograph an image(s) [stick figures are OK!]
- Make a collage of relevant images
- Find a psalm that clarifies your response
- Make an object of any sort
- Find an object at home that resonates with your feelings

Please bring these with you to the next session if at all possible. No one must share their responses but some will want to do so.

Next Session: Wednesday, March 4, 6:30 pm - ***Session II: Justice Matters: Who Are Our Neighbors in Creation and How Do We Serve God's Justice?***

Practicing Community Care of Souls in a Time of Ecological Crisis

Lenten Adult Formation Series II

Prince of Peace Episcopal Church

March 4, 2015

Session II: Justice Matters: Who Are Our Neighbors in Creation and How Do We Serve God's Justice?

Opening Prayer

Responses to Session I

Kivalina: A Case Study in Social and Cultural Justice

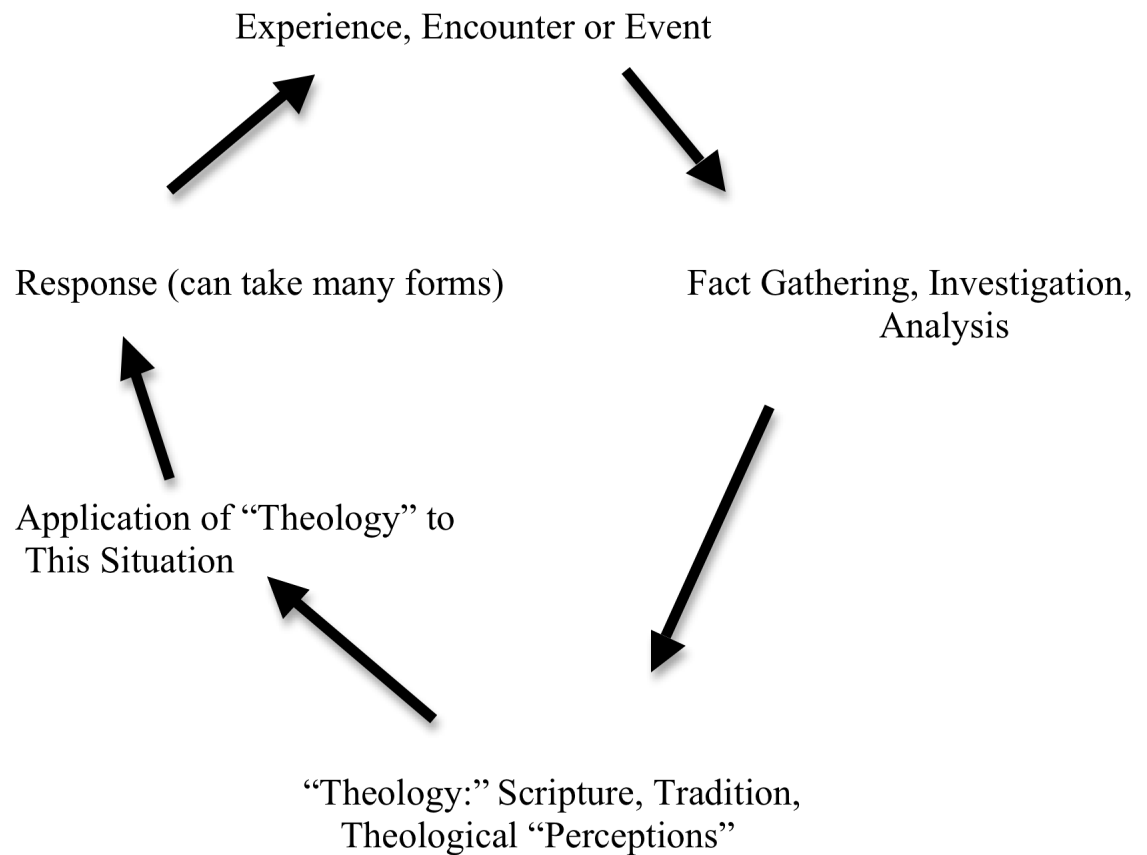
Excerpts from the following article were presented:

Chris Mooney, "The remote Alaskan village that needs to be relocated due to climate change," Washington Post, February 24, 2015.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/02/24/the-remote-alaskan-village-that-needs-to-be-relocated-due-to-climate-change/>

Pastoral Care in Theory

Figure 1: Modified “Pastoral Cycle of Care”



Stephen Pattison proposes "...[to create] critical space and opportunities for growth which are essential if human beings are to attain to the glory of the children of God." He then lists fifteen "theological perceptions" that might be included in a theologically-based vision of pastoral care. The twelve most promising of his proposals for our use (reordered and regrouped for that purpose) are these:

- Creation is a whole, and a very large whole.
- The creation does not belong to any one person or group of people.
- Humans are not in control of creation.
- The spirit of life is everywhere.

With these first four proposals, pastoral care is given a much larger context (or, really, contexts) than the familiar interaction of a caregiver and care receiver. He also explicitly honors a theology of creation that is central to all human endeavor.

To continue with his propositions:

- Life, truth and salvation in their most authentic forms do not come from above, but from below.
- People are called to be children of God and brothers and sisters of one another.
- We are all in it together.

These three theological propositions provide a strong suggestion that the work of caring for one another can be mutual, communal and relational. And finally,

- Life is a mystery.
- Life is complex, and can be amazingly bounteous and generous.
- Surprise is possible.
- We are on a journey to the future which is necessarily mostly unknown.
- Successful outcomes are not the sole, or even the most important measure of human endeavor.

This final group of propositions stands in strong contrast to the underlying (if unspoken) assumption of the traditional approaches to pastoral care where the caregivers *as clinicians* are in some sense in control of the outcomes of care – and that we can recognize those outcomes as resulting directly from the provision of care.

Exercise Three: Forming A Response (homework!)

You are strongly encouraged to form a response to this second session in any way that helps you to process and clarify your thoughts and emotions. A wide range of possible responses exists, so choose what seems most compelling to you *at this time*. Possibilities include

- Compose a prayer, a hymn, write a song
- Write a poem, an essay, a series of journal entries
- Write a letter to someone you know, or someone you do not know
- Draw, paint or photograph an image(s) [stick figures are OK!]
- Make a collage of relevant images
- Find a psalm that clarifies your response
- Make an object of any sort
- Find an object at home that resonates with your feelings

Please bring these with you to the next session if at all possible. No one must share their responses but some will want to do so.

Final Session: Wednesday, March 11, 6:30 pm - ***Session III: Restoring Hope and Taking Action: Being Church in This Time of Crisis***

Practicing Community Care of Souls in a Time of Ecological Crisis

Lenten Adult Formation Series III

Prince of Peace Episcopal Church

March 11, 2015

Session III: Restoring Hope and Taking Action – Being Church in This Time of Crisis

Opening Prayer

Responses to Session II

Kivalina: Part 2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4oINN_KUIA

Exercise One: Hope for the People of Kivalina

During our second session we had a lively discussion around the question “What would justice look like to the people of Kivalina?” Tonight we will ask ourselves:

“How would the people of Kivalina describe their hope?”

Exercise Two: Doing Church as Pastoral Care

In your small group discuss and be prepared to describe how you might take an aspect of “doing church” and intentionally direct it toward providing pastoral care to one another. **The goals would be to reduce anxiety, instill hope and build community.** Let’s focus on these possibilities from the list we developed in the first session:

- a. Prayer (together)
- b. Liturgy or ritual
- c. Teaching and Learning
- d. Preaching
- e. Opportunities for Deep, Mutual Listening

It is not necessary or possible to develop a detailed plan, but how would you approach our goals by “doing church” in this way?

A Reminder: During our second session we worked with some of Stephen Pattison’s theological proposals as they related to both pastoral care and the climate change crisis. They are:

- Creation is a whole, and a very large whole.

- The creation does not belong to any one person or group of people.
- Humans are not in control of creation.
- The spirit of life is everywhere.
- Life, truth and salvation in their most authentic forms do not come from above, but from below.
- People are called to be children of God and brothers and sisters of one another.
- We are all in it together.
- Life is a mystery.
- Life is complex, and can be amazingly bounteous and generous.
- Surprise is possible.
- We are on a journey to the future which is necessarily mostly unknown.
- Successful outcomes are not the sole, or even the most important measure of human endeavor.

Exercise Three: Describe Your Vision

Take a few minutes and assess where your willingness to engage with the climate change crisis seems now to begin and to end. Do you feel that you are more, or less, motivated to make a positive contribution to the problem than you were before we spent this time together?

Appendix 3
A “Rite III” Eucharistic Prayer

A “Rite III” Eucharistic Prayer Composed for Use in the 2015 Lenten Study Series

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love
 of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be
 with you all.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Creator God, Lover of the Universe, the whole of creation sings of your glory. Out of your ecstatic desire, all that is and will become exploded from the limitless void. Your Word spoke through the stardust, animating a cosmic dance beyond human imagination. When you shined the light of your love upon this tiny blue planet, you bestowed the gift of life itself.

For all of this we turn our faces toward you in awe and sing our unending thanks and praise.

In time you fashioned us in your likeness. You endowed us with taste and sight, hearing, smell and touch so that we might savor your Creation and love it as you do. Always yearning for us, you call to us and draw us toward your embrace. Yet, in our weakness and imperfection we are often overwhelmed by your magnificent gifts, choosing domination and possession, greed and gluttony over the freedom and peace of your love.

Your invitation for us to share in caring for your creation has gone unanswered.

Yet still you desire us passionately, calling again and again for us to return to you in loving communion, sending holy women and men into our midst to guide our paths back to you. Finally, rather than turning your face away, you made your Word become flesh even as we are flesh.

Your only Son, born of a woman, walked among us, showing us your human face and teaching us your ways of compassion and grace.

And so we join the saints and angels in proclaiming your glory, as we sing,

Celebrant and People

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Loving Creator, your inexhaustible love causes the stars to spin, the tides to flow and awakens our holy longing for you. Seeking us, you sent to us your human son, and we remember the ultimate gift of his transforming sacrifice for us. Therefore we offer you, from your creation, these gifts of bread and wine to be sanctified by your Holy Spirit as the body and blood of your Word made flesh.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Recalling now his suffering and death, and celebrating his resurrection and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Accept, O Lord, our sacrifice of praise, this memorial of our redemption.

Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts. Let them be for us the Body and Blood of your Son. And grant that we who eat this bread and drink this cup may be filled with your life and goodness.

Loving creator, open our eyes, open our hearts to the glories of your Creation and transform us into the body of your Christ. Teach us to dream of peace, prepare us to seek your ways and strengthen us to pursue the arc of justice in your world.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. *AMEN*

This Eucharistic Prayer is constructed using **An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist: Form 2** in the Book of Common Prayer.

Readings Selected for the 2015 Lenten Series Eucharists

A Reading from Genesis

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Psalm 147:1-12

1
How good it is to sing praises to our God! *
how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!

2
The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem; *
he gathers the exiles of Israel.

3
He heals the brokenhearted *
and binds up their wounds.

4
He counts the number of the stars *
and calls them all by their names.

5
Great is our LORD and mighty in power; *
there is no limit to his wisdom.

6
The LORD lifts up the lowly, *
but casts the wicked to the ground.

7
Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; *

make music to our God upon the harp.

8

He covers the heavens with clouds *
and prepares rain for the earth;

9

He makes grass to grow upon the mountains *
and green plants to serve mankind.

10

He provides food for flocks and herds *
and for the young ravens when they cry.

11

He is not impressed by the might of a horse; *
he has no pleasure in the strength of a man;

12

But the LORD has pleasure in those who fear him, *
in those who await his gracious favor.

Matthew 6:19-21, 24

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²⁴“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Appendix 4
Full Text of the Washington Post Feature Article

The remote Alaskan village that needs to be relocated
due to climate change

By Chris Mooney, The Washington Post, February 24, 2015

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/02/24/the-remote-alaskan-village-that-needs-to-be-relocated-due-to-climate-change/>

Appendix 5

A Ritual Designed to Support Learning

Closing Ritual for Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Lenten Formation Series Session II

The Rev. Herb Sprouse

Materials: Three singing bowls, three candles, sufficient small stones for each person to have three. Pass the stones around beforehand. Remind everyone that participation is voluntary.

“This is a ritual of remembrance and forgiveness. The poem is by Nick Drake. It is entitled “Dear Mortals;” from his collection, The Farewell Glacier.” (Northumberland, Bloodaxe Books, 2012)

I. Light the first candle, sound the first bowl.

After the first section (1st 15 lines) of the poem is read:

“Remember a time when you realized that a significant change was about to arrive in your life. This change may or may not have been related to stewardship of the environment. Acknowledge the feelings that may accompany that realization that change was coming, such as fear and anticipation or others.

Remember a time when you realized that a significant change was about to arrive in your life. When you are ready to signal your remembrance, please place a stone in the first bowl.” [Pass the first bowl to collect the stones]

II. Light the second candle, sound the second bowl.

After the second section (lines 16-31) of the poem is read:

“Remember a time when you failed to act in some important way. This failure to act may or may not be related to stewardship of the environment. Acknowledge the feelings that may accompany that failure, such as guilt and remorse and others.

Remember a time when you failed to act in some important way. When you are ready to signal your remembrance, please place a stone in the second bowl.” [Pass the second bowl to collect the stones]

III. Light the third candle, sound the third bowl.

After the third section (final 18 lines) of the poem is read:

“Remember a time when you experienced true forgiveness. This forgiveness may or may not be related to stewardship of the environment. Acknowledge the feelings that may accompany forgiveness, such as joy and freedom and others.

Remember a time when you experienced true forgiveness. When you are ready to signal your remembrance, please place a stone in the third bowl.” [Pass the third bowl to collect the stones]

- IV. Empty the contents of the first bowl into the second.
Empty the contents of the second bowl into the third.
Reverently “mix” the contents of the third bowl
Move the third bowl and the three candles to the center of the table.**

V. Benediction: “Remember and Forgive. Forgive Yourself, Forgive Others and Know God’s Forgiveness. For As We Forgive, So We Will Be Forgiven. Go in Peace.”

Dear Mortals;

“The future says:

Dear mortals;
I know you are busy with your colourful lives;
I have no wish to waste the little time that remains
On arguments and heated debates;
But before I can appear
Please, close your eyes, sit still
And listen carefully
To what I am about to say;
I haven't happened yet, but I will.
I can't pretend it's going to be
Business as usual.
Things are going to change.
I'm going to be unrecognisable.
Please, don't open your eyes, not yet.
I'm not trying to frighten you.
All I ask is that you think of me
Not as a wish or a nightmare, but as a story
You have to tell yourselves -
Not with an ending
In which everyone lives happily ever after,
Or a B-movie apocalypse,
But maybe starting with the line
'To be continued...'
And see what happens next.
Remember this; I am not
Written in stone
But in time -
So please don't shrug and say
What can we do?
It's too late, etc, etc, etc.
Dear mortals,
You are such strange creatures

With your greed and your kindness,
And your hearts like broken toys;
You carry fear with you everywhere
Like a tiny god
In its box of shadows.
You love festivals and music
And good food.
You lie to yourselves
Because you're afraid of the dark.
But the truth is: you are in my hands
And I am in yours.
We are in this together,
Face to face and eye to eye;
We're made for each other.
Now those of you who are still here;
Open your eyes and tell me what you see.”

— Nick Drake

The Farewell Glacier (Bloodaxe Books, 2012)

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Appendix 6

Course Response Questionnaire

Lenten Adult Formation Series 2015

Prince of Peace Episcopal Church

Name (Optional)_____

I attended: Session 1_____ Session 2_____ Session 3_____

1) Please choose three words to describe the emotions you are feeling now as our time together draws to a close.

2) If you attended the first session, do you remember your three words at that time?

3) After these sessions, how would you describe:

How we can help one another cope with and respond to climate change?

What your personal vision is for your future engagement with this issue?

4) Were there aspects of these sessions that you found helpful in your own process of response to Climate Change?

5) Were there areas that were less than helpful?

Finally, are there topics related to pastoral care, “doing church” or Climate Change that you would like to learn more about?

Appendix 7
Sermon Preached for the “Global Preach-in” Sunday
Sponsored by Interfaith Power and Light

Sermon for the Last Sunday After the Epiphany: February 15, 2015
Interfaith Power and Light - Global Climate Change Preaching Sunday
The Rev. Herbert Sprouse

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" This morning is the last Sunday before Lent begins on Wednesday, Ash Wednesday. Each of our lessons today speaks of hidden truths revealed, of manifestations of that which is unseen. Epiphanies. Whether it is the true power of the prophet Elijah forcefully demonstrated in the parting of the waters, or the Psalmist's delight in the perfect beauty of Zion which is God's glory, we are shown what has previously only been briefly glimpsed. Paul's gospel proclamation is also of God's glory, as shown forth by the light of Christ. He writes, "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." These are moments of uncovering, of revelation, of new understanding. These are Epiphanies.

Yet it is what happens on a mountaintop in the presence of Peter, James and John that stops us all in our tracks. For they witness truth revealed in an incomparable way: Jesus is transfigured before their eyes. Too dazzling to gaze upon, he is suddenly something utterly new, something completely unanticipated - even terrifying in his majesty. And he is seen in the presence of the two great prophets who parted mighty waters so that their people could pass through unharmed. Past meets present. Present meets future. "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Listen to him.

As I mentioned last Sunday, today is the day set aside for a national day of preaching on global climate change that is organized by Interfaith Power and Light, an interfaith environmental organization with deep Episcopal Church roots. This is a particularly appropriate day for us at Prince of Peace because our Lenten journey together will involve us deeply in this question over the next weeks. We might ask ourselves, on this day of momentous scriptural Epiphanies, what is being revealed to us **now** about the condition of our world, what is being revealed to us **now** about our role as stewards of the

earth, and, most of all, what is being revealed to us **now** about the love of God for all of creation?

Certainly you are aware of the interrelated issues of global warming and climate change. About the basic facts, I believe there can no longer be meaningful disagreement. Our earth is changing in ways that could eventually make life for most humans and nonhumans unsustainable. What we know is this: average temperatures, worldwide, have been steadily rising and it doesn't take a whole lot of temperature change to destabilize the climate. We are losing arctic ice and ocean levels are rising measurably. It also seems indisputable now that human activity, most importantly deforestation and burning fossil fuels, has contributed to this change very significantly. And yet those very activities are increasing, as population grows worldwide and as the very populous nations in Asia burn more coal and petroleum to support their own economic development.

We know that the earth is a highly buffered system, which means that there has been a great natural resistance to this change in temperature, but which also means that changes in our way of life and our use of the earth, even drastic ones, will take a long time to be felt. We are either very near, or may have already passed a tipping point, after which we will be living with the consequences of our actions for many, many generations to come. Perhaps, in fact, those changes will accelerate and become irreversible within any meaningful measures of human time.

And we know that the impacts of climate change are extremely unjust, and will become more so. The poorest people of our world live near the oceans, seas and rivers. They have contributed little to create these problems and yet they are already losing their homes, their livelihoods and their cultures as the ocean levels rise. We are losing animal and plant species to extinction at an alarming and accelerating rate, and we can't begin to know how those losses impact ecosystems large or small. Politically, the entire planet seems to lack the will to address these problems in any meaningful way and, certainly, the largest, richest developed nations cannot seem to find a way to work together for real change.

With about 95% agreement (or better) among credible scientists about everything I have just said, we must set aside our tendencies to look for the loopholes, to seek for a way to dismiss the science. We must do this in good – Faith. We must resist a confused and confounded commercial media that somehow thinks that balanced reporting on this issue requires the posture that all opinions on the subject are equally valid and must be given equal weight. They are not. We now know too much. Too much has been revealed to us for us to look away. Like Peter, James and John, who did not know what to say in the presence of the Transfigured Christ and the great prophets, if we gaze upon these truths revealed to us, we may well be terrified. Or, we may lose hope. Or we may find ourselves paralyzed, unable to take any action. So again I ask, what is being revealed to us **now** about the condition of our world, about our role as stewards of the earth, and, most of all, about the love of God for all of God's magnificent creation? "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

What we are learning is what the three disciples learned, even through their terror at the sight of the Transfiguration of Christ. We are learning that the power of Almighty God, who brought this earth and all that is and ever will be into being – God's power is the power to transform. The power to alter time and space. The power to create anew, to begin afresh. The power to heal all injuries and comfort all of the afflicted.

Revealed to us on this day of epiphanies is the ongoing reality of God's great desires for our world and for everything that dwells herein. God's desire that we flourish in the love and light of the divine. That through God's Son, born for us, *transfigured for us*, God's great act of love *that is creation itself* can heal, can thrive, can itself be transformed. Can be Transfigured. But we must be part of this healing. And so we ourselves must be healed.

We are learning, as did Peter and James and John, that no one human person can act alone, no one community or nation can prevail in the face of this crisis. Our hope is in the community of the faithful, in the work we can do together, in the common cause we must find. We must accept, at long last, the great commandment to be the Body of

Christ, active in God's world. For this is what we have been created to be. This is why God made us.

"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

Those three disciples were clearly called to witness the Transfiguration because it would transform them. Having been set apart for leadership, this experience of the Transfiguration of Christ was part of their preparation for leadership, for service and for sacrifice as followers of Jesus the Christ. It would fall to them to shepherd a new thing, a new movement into being – the community of those who would follow The Way of Jesus Christ. The Way of the Cross. The Transfiguration of Christ on that mountaintop leads directly to us here today, for there would be no Way to follow without their ability to act upon that great Epiphany. And we know, as Jesus taught them, that their actions were energized, directed and enabled by the Holy Spirit. They could not have made a difference without that presence, without that power. And yet here we are, together. Proof of the power of the Transfiguration. Proof of the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives. And in ours.

And so as we prepare to enter into the cycle of preparation, penitence and reconciliation that we call Lent, we prepare to learn together how we can respond to this Epiphany we have experienced together – the revelation of God's power to use us as instruments of healing and peace. Through our Lenten work of study, contemplation, reflection and worship together, we will learn how to help one another to look past the terror of what we now know to be true – that our lovely blue planet, our tiny island home is gravely endangered. We will learn how to help one another resist diverting our gaze from this difficult truth. We will learn to use the assurance of the love of Christ to restore our hope and confidence. We will find that, through love and care for one another, we can break the bonds of spiritual paralysis and move toward the health that is found in *doing*, found in making a difference, found in following the vocation that is ours in Christ. This Lent will be filled with holy work and, it is my prayer, with the work of healing, of restoration of wholeness in ourselves, that will renew our will to do whatever

we can possibly do to fulfill our roles as stewards of God's beautiful world. I invite you to walk this walk together, through this Lenten season and beyond. And so let us pray:

Most Glorious God, Creator of all that has been, is now and will be, You have made us to serve as stewards of Your earthly creation. But we have failed to accept your call. We avert our gaze from the results of our own actions, we are blind to the injustices we have helped to perpetrate and we are paralyzed by our lack of hope. Take us to the high places to be witnesses of the Transfiguration of your Son, so that our vision of your power and our own vocation may be restored. Heal us so that, together, we may work to heal your world. And help us always to follow the Way of Your Son, the Beloved, to whom we must always listen. AMEN.

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